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(Translation)
PATENT OFFICE
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This is to certify that the annexed is
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as filed with this office.

Date of Application : November 7, 2000
Application Number : JP2000-339741
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wafer
of the
Patent
Office

Commissioner,
Patent Office

Appln. Cert.

(TRANSLATION)

[Document] Application for Patent
[Reference Number] ALPHA02
[Filing Date] November 7, 2000
[Direction] Director-General of the Patent Office
[I. P. C.] H04M 11/06
H04M 1/64

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[Prior Application]

[Application Number] JP2000-209111

[Filing Date] July 10, 2000

[Official Fee]

[Ledger Number] 009896

[Amount] 21000

[List of Attached Documents]

[Document] Specification 1 copy

[Document] Drawing 1 copy

[Document] Abstract 1 copy

[Proof] Yes

[Document Name] Specification

[Title of the Invention]

SYSTEM, MEDIUM, AND INFORMATION SET

[Scope of Claims]

[Claim 1]

A system comprising:

an info-communication terminal for carrying out
info-communications through a telephone network; and
information distributing means of distributing first
information to an e-mail address corresponding to said
info-communication terminal; wherein

when said info-communication terminal makes a
telephone call to a predetermined telephone number,
said information distributing means distributes said
first information by e-mail to said e-mail address
corresponding to said info-communication terminal
generated from the telephone number of said
info-communication terminal according to a predetermined
rule.

[Claim 2]

A system according to Claim 1 comprising e-mail
address generating means of generating said e-mail address
corresponding to said info-communication terminal from said
info-communication terminal according to said
predetermined rule.

[Claim 3]

A system according to Claim 1 or 2 comprising receiving means of receiving said telephone call from said info-communication terminal to said predetermined telephone number.

[Claim 4]

A system comprising information distributing means of, when an info-communication terminal for carrying out info-communications through a telephone network makes a telephone call to a predetermined telephone number, distributing first information to an e-mail address corresponding to said info-communication terminal generated from the telephone number of said info-communication terminal according to a predetermined rule.

[Claim 5]

A system comprising e-mail address generating means of, when an info-communication terminal for carrying out info-communications through a telephone network makes a telephone call to a predetermined telephone number, generating an e-mail address corresponding to said info-communication terminal from the telephone number of said info-communication terminal according to a predetermined rule, wherein

first information is distributed to said generated

e-mail address.

[Claim 6]

A system comprising:

receiving means of receiving a telephone call, when an info-communication terminal for carrying out info-communications through a telephone network makes said telephone call to a predetermined telephone number, wherein

e-mail address corresponding to said info-communication terminal is generated from the telephone number of said info-communication terminal according to a predetermined rule; and

first information is distributed to said generated e-mail address.

[Claim 7]

A system comprising:

e-mail address generating means of, when an info-communication terminal for carrying out info-communications through a telephone network makes a telephone call to a predetermined telephone number, generating an e-mail address corresponding to said info-communication terminal from the telephone number of said info-communication terminal according to a predetermined rule; and

information distributing means for distributing first information to said generated e-mail address.

[Claim 8]

A system comprising receiving means of receiving a telephone call when an info-communication terminal for carrying out info-communications through a telephone network makes a telephone call to a predetermined telephone number, and e-mail address generating means of generating an e-mail address corresponding to said info-communication terminal from the telephone number of said info-communication terminal according to a predetermined rule, wherein

first information is distributed to said generated e-mail address.

[Claim 9]

A system comprising:

receiving means of receiving a telephone call, when an info-communication terminal for carrying out info-communications through a telephone network makes said telephone call to a predetermined telephone number; and

information distributing means of distributing first information to an e-mail address corresponding to said info-communication terminal generated from the telephone number of said info-communication terminal according to a predetermined rule.

[Claim 10]

A system of an info-communication terminal

comprising:

telephone calling means of making a telephone call to a predetermined telephone number; and

e-mail acquiring means of acquiring first information; wherein

when said telephone calling means makes a telephone call to a predetermined telephone number,

said first information is distributed by e-mail to an e-mail address corresponding to said info-communication terminal generated from the telephone number of said info-communication terminal according to a predetermined rule.

[Claim 11]

A system comprising information providing means of providing the browse address of an Internet information providing site which provides information on a predetermined item, as second information to an info-communication terminal via said Internet, wherein:

when said info-communication terminal makes a telephone call to a predetermined telephone number, an e-mail address corresponding to said info-communication terminal is generated from the telephone number of said info-communication terminal according to a predetermined rule, and then first information is distributed to said generated e-mail address;

said distributed first information describes a browse address used for accessing said system; and

said info-communication terminal accesses an information distribution server on the basis of said first information.

[Claim 12]

A system according to any one of Claims 1-11 wherein:
a plurality of e-mail addresses are generated corresponding to said info-communication terminal; and
said first information is distributed to said plurality of e-mail addresses.

[Claim 13]

A system according to any one of Claims 1-11, wherein the amount and/or the contents of said first information are changed depending on the telephone number of said info-communication terminal, said predetermined rule, or said e-mail address.

[Claim 14]

A system according to any one of Claims 1-13, wherein said e-mail address of said info-communication terminal is determined using also a first table for corresponding the telephone number and the e-mail address of said info-communication terminal to each other.

[Claim 15]

A system according to Claim 14, wherein when said

distribution of said first information was successful, generated is a second table for corresponding said e-mail address and the telephone number of said info-communication terminal corresponding to said e-mail address to each other.

[Claim 16]

A system according to Claim 15 wherein:

said e-mail address corresponding to said telephone number of said info-communication terminal is acquired by searching said first table and/or said second table, and then said first information is distributed to said acquired e-mail address; and

when said e-mail address corresponding to said telephone number of said info-communication terminal cannot be acquired by searching said first table and/or said second table, the e-mail address of said info-communication terminal is generated from said telephone number of said info-communication terminal according to a predetermined rule, and then said first information is distributed to said generated e-mail address.

[Claim 17]

A system according to Claim 15, wherein after said first information is distributed to said e-mail address generated according to said predetermined rule, said e-mail address corresponding to said telephone number of said info-communication terminal is acquired by searching said

first table and/or said second table, and then said first information is distributed also to said acquired e-mail address.

[Claim 18]

A system according to Claim 15 wherein:

said e-mail address corresponding to said telephone number of said info-communication terminal is acquired by searching said first table and/or said second table; and

said first information is distributed to said acquired e-mail address and said e-mail address generated according to said predetermined rule.

[Claim 19]

A system according to any one of Claims 14-18 wherein:

said e-mail address corresponding to said telephone number of said info-communication terminal is acquired by searching said first table or said second table, and then said first information is distributed to said acquired e-mail address; and

when said distribution of said first information to said e-mail address was unsuccessful, said e-mail address is deleted from said first table or said second table.

[Claim 20]

A system according to any one of Claims 14-19, wherein when said distribution of said first information to said e-mail address generated according to said predetermined

rule was successful, and when said e-mail address is thereby registered into said first table and/or said second table, and further when an e-mail address corresponding to said telephone number of said info-communication terminal is already registered in said first table and/or said second table, said e-mail address presently registered is updated into said e-mail address to which said distribution of said first information was successful.

[Claim 21]

A system according to any one of Claims 1-20 wherein:
there are a plurality of said predetermined telephone numbers; and

said info-communication terminal selects desired said first information by selecting a telephone number to which a telephone call is made among said plurality of telephone numbers.

[Claim 22]

A system according to Claim 21, wherein said plurality of telephone numbers can be specified by selection numbers.

[Claim 23]

A system according to any one of Claims 1-22 wherein:
said info-communication terminal can be connected to the Internet; and

said first information describes the browse address used for accessing said Internet information providing site

which provides information on a predetermined item.

[Claim 24]

A system according to Claim 23, wherein
said first information is in a hierarchical form, and
wherein

when there are a plurality of predetermined telephone
numbers:

each of said plurality of predetermined telephone
numbers is corresponded to each of said hierarchical first
information items;

a portion of said first information describes said
predetermined telephone number used for obtaining said
first information in the lower hierarchy; and

the other portion of said first information describes
the browse address used for accessing said Internet
information providing site.

[Claim 25]

A system according to any one of Claims 1-22, wherein
said first information describes information on a
predetermined item.

[Claim 26]

A system according to Claim 21 or 22, wherein all or
part of said first information describes all or part of
said plurality of telephone numbers.

[Claim 27]

A system according to Claim 26 wherein:

said first information is in a hierarchical form;

each of said plurality of predetermined telephone numbers is corresponded to each of said hierarchical first information items;

a portion of said first information describes said predetermined telephone number used for obtaining said first information in the lower hierarchy; and

the other portion of said first information describes information on a predetermined item.

[Claim 28]

A system according to any one of Claims 1-22 wherein:

said info-communication terminal can be connected to the Internet;

said first information describes the browse address used for accessing an information distribution server which provides, as second information to said info-communication terminal via the Internet, the browse address of said Internet information providing site which provides information on a predetermined item;

said info-communication terminal access said information distribution server on the basis of said first information; and

said second information is provided from said information distribution server to said info-communication

terminal.

[Claim 29]

A system according to Claim 28, wherein said second information is provided to said info-communication terminal by e-mail.

[Claim 30]

A system according to Claim 28, wherein said second information is provided to said info-communication terminal by Web page.

[Claim 31]

A system according to any one of Claims 28-30, wherein said first information and/or said second information are in a hierarchical form.

[Claim 32]

A system according to any one of Claims 1-23, 25, and 28-31 comprising voice guidance means of sending a voice guidance message when said info-communication terminal makes a telephone call to said predetermined telephone number, wherein

said info-communication terminal selects desired first information according to said voice guidance message.

[Claim 33]

A system according to Claim 3, 6, 8, or 9 wherein:

said receiving means acquires the telephone number of said info-communication terminal on the basis of said

telephone call from said info-communication terminal according to number notifying service; and

an e-mail address corresponding to said info-communication terminal is generated from said acquired telephone number.

[Claim 34]

A system according to Claim 33, wherein when a predetermined time duration has been elapsed after a telephone call from said info-communication terminal is received, said receiving means replies to said telephone call, and after that, terminates the voice communication.

[Claim 35]

A computer-processable medium carrying a program and/or data for causing a computer to execute all or part of the function of all or part of said means and said info-communication terminal of said system according to any one of Claims 1-34.

[Claim 36]

An information set composed of a program and/or data for causing a computer to execute all or part of the function of all or part of said means and said info-communication terminal of said system according to any one of Claims 1-34.

[Detailed Description of the Invention]

[0001]

The present invention relates to: a system for distributing information to an information communications terminal; a medium; and an information set.

[0002]

BACKGROUND ART

The use of portable telephones has spread widely in recent years. The services available in portable telephone terminals include: ordinary voice communications; transmission and reception of e-mails; and connection to the Internet in order to access and browse Internet Web pages prepared in HDML, compact HTML, or the like.

[0003]

Even in the outside of the home or office, a user can input a URL (uniform resource locator) in a portable telephone terminal in order to access an Internet Web page. The Web page is then displayed on the display of the portable telephone terminal. For example, when inputting an appropriate URL and thereby accessing a Web page providing bargain sale information, one can obtain the bargain sale information even in the outside of the home.

[0004]

As such, by virtue of a portable telephone terminal, a user can access Internet Web pages and thereby obtain necessary information even in the outside of the home or office.

[0005]

Further, in case of a serious natural disaster such as an earthquake, sufferers obtain information on refuge sites from radio broadcasting or other sufferers, and thereby go to safe refuge sites.

[0006]

[Problems to be Solved by the Invention]

When a user desires to obtain bargain sale information, but does not know the URL of a Web page providing the bargain sale information, the user cannot obtain the bargain sale information. That is, when the URL of a Web page providing desired information is not known, the desired information cannot be obtained.

[0007]

Even in the cases other than Web pages, when certain information is desired to obtain, but when the method to obtain the information is not known, the desired information is difficult to obtain.

[0008]

That is, there has been the problem (a first problem) that when certain information is desired to obtain via a mobile info-communication terminal such as a portable telephone terminal, but when the method to obtain the information is not known, the desired information is difficult and laborious to obtain.

[0009]

A mobile info-communication terminal, such as a portable telephone terminal, is provided with a menu prepared by a telecommunications company. Thus, even when the URL of a Web page providing desired information is not known, the hierarchy of the menu can be traced to a Web page providing the desired information in some cases. Nevertheless, the search for the desired information is laborious, and the desired information is not always found.

[0010]

Further, in case that an information distributing company or the like desires the guide of the information distributing company's Web page to be incorporated into the menu provided by the telecommunications company, the information distributing company needs to request the telecommunications company for the incorporation and await the order of processing, since the menu is managed solely by the telecommunications company. Thus, it takes substantially long time for the guide of the information distributing company's Web page to be incorporated into the menu. Further, in some cases, the incorporation is not in the desired manner.

[0011]

That is, there has been the problem (a second problem) that the menu provided by such a telecommunications company

needs to be improved in the usability both for users who use mobile info-communication terminals in order to obtain desired information and for information distributors who provide information onto the mobile info-communication terminals.

[0012]

Further, when information on the Umeda area in Osaka is desired to obtain in the menu provided by a telecommunications company, the hierarchy of the menu needs to be searched and thereby traced to the information on the Umeda area in Osaka. As such, area-specific information is laborious to obtain, and the area-specific information is not always found.

[0013]

That is, there has been the problem (a third problem) that in the menu provided by a telecommunications company, area-specific information is laborious to obtain, and that the area-specific information is not always found.

[0014]

Further, in case of a serious natural disaster such as an earthquake, it takes long time for sufferers to obtain information on safe refuge sites from radio broadcasting. Further, information obtained from other sufferers may be incorrect in some cases, because the information is based on oral communications.

[0015]

That is, there has been the problem (a fourth problem) that in case of a serious natural disaster, it is difficult to transmit information for the safety of sufferers accurately and rapidly to the sufferers.

[0016]

With considering the above-mentioned first problem, an object of the present invention is to provide: a system for providing desired information easily; an information distribution method; a medium; and an information set.

[0017]

With considering the second problem, an object of the invention is to provide: a system having good usability for users and information distributors; a medium; and an information set.

[0018]

With considering the third problem, an object of the invention is to provide: a system capable of distributing area-specific information; a medium; and an information set.

[0019]

With considering the fourth problem, an object of the invention is to provide: a system capable of transmitting information for the safety of sufferers accurately and rapidly to the sufferers in case of a serious natural

disaster; a medium; and an information set.

[0020]

[Means to Solve the Problems]

To solve the above-described problems, the 1st present invention (corresponding to Claim 1) is a system comprising:

an info-communication terminal for carrying out info-communications through a telephone network; and

information distributing means of distributing first information to an e-mail address corresponding to said info-communication terminal; wherein

when said info-communication terminal makes a telephone call to a predetermined telephone number,

said information distributing means distributes said first information by e-mail to said e-mail address corresponding to said info-communication terminal generated from the telephone number of said info-communication terminal according to a predetermined rule.

[0021]

The 2nd present invention (corresponding to Claim 2) is a system according to Claim 1 comprising e-mail address generating means of generating said e-mail address corresponding to said info-communication terminal from said info-communication terminal according to said predetermined rule.

[0022]

The 3rd present invention (corresponding to Claim 3) is a system according to the 1st or 2nd present invention comprising receiving means of receiving said telephone call from said info-communication terminal to said predetermined telephone number.

[0023]

The 4th present invention (corresponding to Claim 4) is a system comprising information distributing means of, when an info-communication terminal for carrying out info-communications through a telephone network makes a telephone call to a predetermined telephone number, distributing first information to an e-mail address corresponding to said info-communication terminal generated from the telephone number of said info-communication terminal according to a predetermined rule.

[0024]

The 5th present invention (corresponding to Claim 5) is a system comprising e-mail address generating means of, when an info-communication terminal for carrying out info-communications through a telephone network makes a telephone call to a predetermined telephone number, generating an e-mail address corresponding to said info-communication terminal from the telephone number of

said info-communication terminal according to a predetermined rule, wherein

first information is distributed to said generated e-mail address.

[0025]

The 6th present invention (corresponding to Claim 6) is a system comprising:

receiving means of receiving a telephone call, when an info-communication terminal for carrying out info-communications through a telephone network makes said telephone call to a predetermined telephone number, wherein

e-mail address corresponding to said info-communication terminal is generated from the telephone number of said info-communication terminal according to a predetermined rule; and

first information is distributed to said generated e-mail address.

[0026]

The 7th present invention (corresponding to Claim 7) is a system comprising:

e-mail address generating means of, when an info-communication terminal for carrying out info-communications through a telephone network makes a telephone call to a predetermined telephone number, generating an e-mail address corresponding to said

info-communication terminal from the telephone number of said info-communication terminal according to a predetermined rule; and

information distributing means for distributing first information to said generated e-mail address.

[0027]

The 8th present invention (corresponding to Claim 8) is a system comprising receiving means of receiving a telephone call when an info-communication terminal for carrying out info-communications through a telephone network makes a telephone call to a predetermined telephone number, and e-mail address generating means of generating an e-mail address corresponding to said info-communication terminal from the telephone number of said info-communication terminal according to a predetermined rule, wherein

first information is distributed to said generated e-mail address.

[0028]

The 9th present invention (corresponding to Claim 9) is a system comprising:

receiving means of receiving a telephone call, when an info-communication terminal for carrying out info-communications through a telephone network makes said telephone call to a predetermined telephone number; and

information distributing means of distributing first information to an e-mail address corresponding to said info-communication terminal generated from the telephone number of said info-communication terminal according to a predetermined rule.

[0029]

The 10th present invention (corresponding to Claim 10) is a system of an info-communication terminal comprising:

telephone calling means of making a telephone call to a predetermined telephone number; and

e-mail acquiring means of acquiring first information; wherein

when said telephone calling means makes a telephone call to a predetermined telephone number,

said first information is distributed by e-mail to an e-mail address corresponding to said info-communication terminal generated from the telephone number of said info-communication terminal according to a predetermined rule.

[0030]

The 11th present invention (corresponding to Claim 11) is a system comprising information providing means of providing the browse address of an Internet information providing site which provides information on a

predetermined item, as second information to an info-communication terminal via said Internet, wherein:

when said info-communication terminal makes a telephone call to a predetermined telephone number, an e-mail address corresponding to said info-communication terminal is generated from the telephone number of said info-communication terminal according to a predetermined rule, and then first information is distributed to said generated e-mail address;

said distributed first information describes a browse address used for accessing said system; and

said info-communication terminal accesses an information distribution server on the basis of said first information.

[0031]

The 12th present invention (corresponding to Claim 12) is a system according to any one of the 1st - 11th present inventions wherein:

a plurality of e-mail addresses are generated corresponding to said info-communication terminal; and

said first information is distributed to said plurality of e-mail addresses.

[0032]

The 13th present invention (corresponding to Claim 13) is a system according to any one of the 1st - 11th

inventions, wherein the amount and/or the contents of said first information are changed depending on the telephone number of said info-communication terminal, said predetermined rule, or said e-mail address.

[0033]

The 14th present invention (corresponding to Claim 14) is a system according to any one of the 1st - 13th present inventions, wherein said e-mail address of said info-communication terminal is determined using also a first table for corresponding the telephone number and the e-mail address of said info-communication terminal to each other.

[0034]

The 15th present invention (corresponding to Claim 15) is a system according to the 14th present invention, wherein when said distribution of said first information was successful, generated is a second table for corresponding said e-mail address and the telephone number of said info-communication terminal corresponding to said e-mail address to each other.

[0035]

The 16th present invention (corresponding to Claim 16) is a system according to the 15th present invention wherein:

said e-mail address corresponding to said telephone

number of said info-communication terminal is acquired by searching said first table and/or said second table, and then said first information is distributed to said acquired e-mail address; and

when said e-mail address corresponding to said telephone number of said info-communication terminal cannot be acquired by searching said first table and/or said second table, the e-mail address of said info-communication terminal is generated from said telephone number of said info-communication terminal according to a predetermined rule, and then said first information is distributed to said generated e-mail address.

[0036]

[Claim 17]

The 17th present invention (corresponding to Claim 17) is a system according to the 15th present invention, wherein after said first information is distributed to said e-mail address generated according to said predetermined rule, said e-mail address corresponding to said telephone number of said info-communication terminal is acquired by searching said first table and/or said second table, and then said first information is distributed also to said acquired e-mail address.

[0037]

The 18th present invention (corresponding to Claim

18) is a system according to the 15th present invention wherein:

said e-mail address corresponding to said telephone number of said info-communication terminal is acquired by searching said first table and/or said second table; and

said first information is distributed to said acquired e-mail address and said e-mail address generated according to said predetermined rule.

[0038]

The 19th present invention (corresponding to Claim 19) is a system according to any one of the 14th -18th present inventions wherein:

said e-mail address corresponding to said telephone number of said info-communication terminal is acquired by searching said first table or said second table, and then said first information is distributed to said acquired e-mail address; and

when said distribution of said first information to said e-mail address was unsuccessful, said e-mail address is deleted from said first table or said second table.

[0039]

The 20th present invention (corresponding to Claim 20) is a system according to any one of the 14th -19th present inventions, wherein when said distribution of said first information to said e-mail address generated according to

said predetermined rule was successful, and when said e-mail address is thereby registered into said first table and/or said second table, and further when an e-mail address corresponding to said telephone number of said info-communication terminal is already registered in said first table and/or said second table, said e-mail address presently registered is updated into said e-mail address to which said distribution of said first information was successful.

[0040]

The 21st present invention (corresponding to Claim 21) is a system according to any one of the 1st - 20th present inventions wherein:

there are a plurality of said predetermined telephone numbers; and

said info-communication terminal selects desired said first information by selecting a telephone number to which a telephone call is made among said plurality of telephone numbers.

[0041]

The 22nd present invention (corresponding to Claim 22) is a system according to the 21st present invention, wherein said plurality of telephone numbers can be specified by selection numbers.

[0042]

The 23rd present invention (corresponding to Claim 23) is a system according to any one of the 1st - 22nd present inventions wherein:

said info-communication terminal can be connected to the Internet; and

said first information describes the browse address used for accessing said Internet information providing site which provides information on a predetermined item.

[0043]

The 24th present invention (corresponding to Claim 24) is a system according to the 23rd present invention, wherein

said first information is in a hierarchical form, and wherein

when there are a plurality of predetermined telephone numbers:

each of said plurality of predetermined telephone numbers is corresponded to each of said hierarchical first information items;

a portion of said first information describes said predetermined telephone number used for obtaining said first information in the lower hierarchy; and

the other portion of said first information describes the browse address used for accessing said Internet information providing site.

[0044]

The 25th present invention (corresponding to Claim 25) is a system according to any one of the 1st - 22nd present inventions, wherein said first information describes information on a predetermined item.

[0045]

The 26th present invention (corresponding to Claim 26) is a system according to the 21st or 22nd present invention, wherein all or part of said first information describes all or part of said plurality of telephone numbers.

[0046]

The 27th present invention (corresponding to Claim 27) is a system according to the 26th present invention wherein:

said first information is in a hierarchical form;

each of said plurality of predetermined telephone numbers is corresponded to each of said hierarchical first information items;

a portion of said first information describes said predetermined telephone number used for obtaining said first information in the lower hierarchy; and

the other portion of said first information describes information on a predetermined item.

[0047]

The 28th present invention (corresponding to Claim

28) is a system according to any one of the 1st - 22nd present inventions wherein:

said info-communication terminal can be connected to the Internet;

said first information describes the browse address used for accessing an information distribution server which provides, as second information to said info-communication terminal via the Internet, the browse address of said Internet information providing site which provides information on a predetermined item;

said info-communication terminal access said information distribution server on the basis of said first information; and

said second information is provided from said information distribution server to said info-communication terminal.

[0048]

The 29th present invention (corresponding to Claim 29) is a system according to the 28th present invention, wherein said second information is provided to said info-communication terminal by e-mail.

[0049]

The 30th present invention (corresponding to Claim 30) is a system according to the 28th present invention, wherein said second information is provided to said

info-communication terminal by Web page.

[0050]

The 31st present invention (corresponding to Claim 31) is a system according to any one of the 28th - 30th present invention, wherein said first information and/or said second information are in a hierarchical form.

[0051]

The 32nd present invention (corresponding to Claim 32) is a system according to any one of the 1st - 23rd, 25th, and 28th - 31st present inventions comprising voice guidance means of sending a voice guidance message when said info-communication terminal makes a telephone call to said predetermined telephone number, wherein

said info-communication terminal selects desired first information according to said voice guidance message.

[0052]

The 33rd present invention (corresponding to Claim 33) is a system according to the 3rd, 6th, 8th, or 9th present invention wherein:

said receiving means acquires the telephone number of said info-communication terminal on the basis of said telephone call from said info-communication terminal according to number notifying service; and

an e-mail address corresponding to said info-communication terminal is generated from said acquired

telephone number.

[0053]

The 34th present invention (corresponding to Claim 34) is a system according to the 33rd present invention, wherein when a predetermined time duration has been elapsed after a telephone call from said info-communication terminal is received, said receiving means replies to said telephone call, and after that, terminates the voice communication.

[0054]

The 35th present invention (corresponding to Claim 35) is a computer-processable medium carrying a program and/or data for causing a computer to execute all or part of the function of all or part of said means and said info-communication terminal of said system according to any one of the 1st - 34th present inventions.

[0055]

The 36th present invention (corresponding to Claim 36) is an information set composed of a program and/or data for causing a computer to execute all or part of the function of all or part of said means and said info-communication terminal of said system according to any one of the 1st - 34th present inventions.

[0056]

[Embodiments of the Invention]

The embodiments of the invention are described below with reference to the drawings.

[0057]

(Embodiment 1)

Embodiment 1 is described below at first.

[0058]

Figure 1 shows the configuration of an information distribution system according to the present embodiment.

[0059]

The information distribution system according to the present embodiment comprises a guidance apparatus 1, a portable telephone terminal 2, a guidance server 3, a relay station 4, a provider 5, the Internet 6, and an information providing site 20.

[0060]

The guidance apparatus 1 is an apparatus for transmitting guidance information which describes the URL of a Web page provided by the guidance server 3, to the portable telephone terminal 2 by e-mail in response to a telephone call from the portable telephone terminal 2.

[0061]

The portable telephone terminal 2 is a portable telephone terminal capable of being connected to the Internet. In Figure 1, a single portable telephone terminal 2 is solely shown. However, a plurality of portable

telephone terminals 2 are used actually.

[0062]

The portable telephone terminal 2 comprises:

telephone calling means (not shown) of making a telephone call to a predetermined telephone number; and e-mail acquiring means of receiving an e-mail. The telephone calling means is means of making a telephone call via the relay station 4 and a telephone line. The e-mail acquiring means is means of acquiring an e-mail from a mail box for the portable telephone terminal 2 provided in the provider 5.

[0063]

The guidance server 3 is a Web server for providing the addresses of Web pages provided by the information providing site 20, as a Web page via the Internet 6 to the portable telephone terminal 2.

[0064]

The guidance apparatus 1 is connected to the Internet 6 and the relay station 4. The portable telephone terminal 2 can be connected to the Internet 6 via the relay station 4 and the provider 5.

[0065]

The relay station 4 is an apparatus for relaying between the portable telephone terminal 2 and the telephone line network.

[0066]

The provider 5 is an apparatus for connecting the portable telephone terminal 2 to the Internet.

[0067]

The guidance apparatus 1 comprises telephone receiving means 7, telephone number acquiring means 8, e-mail address acquiring means 9, a user information database 10, e-mail transmitting means 11, and a distributed information database 12.

[0068]

The telephone receiving means 7 is means of receiving a telephone call from the portable telephone terminal 2.

[0069]

The telephone number acquiring means 8 is means of acquiring the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2 making the telephone call, by number notifying service. The number notifying service is a service in which the caller's telephone number is notified to the receiver when a telephone call is made. This service is provided by the telephone company.

[0070]

The e-mail address acquiring means 9 is means of referring to the user information database 10 on the basis of the acquired telephone number and thereby acquiring the e-mail address corresponding to the acquired telephone

number.

[0071]

The user information database 10 is a database for storing the information of the users who may use the guidance apparatus 1, and used for corresponding the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2 to the e-mail address thereof.

[0072]

The e-mail transmitting means 11 is means of reading out to-be-distributed guidance information from the distributed information database 12 and thereby transmitting the information by e-mail to the acquired e-mail.

[0073]

Here, the user information database 10 according to the present embodiment is an example of a first table according to the invention. The URL according to the present embodiment is an example of an information browsing address according to the invention. The portable telephone terminal according to the present embodiment is an example of an info-communication terminal according to the invention. The guidance information such as an e-mail transmitted from the guidance apparatus 1 to the portable telephone terminal 2 according to the present embodiment is an example of first information according to the invention.

The guidance information such as a Web page and an e-mail provided from the guidance server 3 to the portable telephone terminal 2 according to the present embodiment is an example of second information according to the invention. The e-mail transmitting means 11 and the distributed information database according to the present embodiment constitute an example of information distributing means according to the invention. The e-mail address acquiring means 9 and the user information database 10 according to the present embodiment constitute an example of e-mail address generating means according to the invention. The telephone number acquiring means 8 and the telephone receiving means 7 according to the present embodiment constitute an example of receiving means according to the invention. The guidance server 3 is an example of information providing means according to the invention.

[0074]

The operation of the present embodiment in such a configuration is described below.

[0075]

Figure 2 shows interactions among the guidance apparatus 1, the portable telephone terminal 2, the guidance server 3, and the information providing site 20.

[0076]

It is assumed that a user goes out with carrying the

portable telephone terminal 2.

[0077]

Further, it is assumed that in the outside, the user desires to find a shop holding a bargain sale and thereby purchase teenagers' wear at a low price.

[0078]

The outline of the operation of the present embodiment is described below at first. And then, the detail is described later.

[0079]

In such a case, at first, the user makes a telephone call from the portable telephone terminal 2 to the guidance apparatus 1 as indicated by a telephone call 70 in Figure 2.

[0080]

Then, the guidance apparatus 1 transmits guidance information which lists telephone numbers utilized by the user for selecting desired information, to the e-mail address of the portable telephone terminal 2 by e-mail as indicated by e-mail transmission 71.

[0081]

The user selects desired information and then makes a telephone call again from the portable telephone terminal 2 to a telephone number corresponding to the desired information among the telephone numbers listed in the

received guidance information, as indicated by a telephone call 72. Then, the guidance apparatus 1 transmits guidance information describing the URL of a Web page provided by the guidance server 3, to the portable telephone terminal 2 by e-mail as indicated by e-mail transmission 73.

[0082]

The portable telephone terminal 2 accesses the Web page according to the URL described in the received e-mail, as indicated by access 74. Then, the guidance server 3 provides the Web page utilized by the user for selecting desired information, to the portable telephone terminal 2 as indicated by Web page delivery 75.

[0083]

The portable telephone terminal 2 browses the received Web page and thereby selects desired information. Then, the portable telephone terminal 2 accesses again the guidance server 3 as indicated by access 76. The guidance server 3 then provides a Web page which lists items each having the link to an information providing site 20 providing the desired information, to the portable telephone terminal 2 as indicated by Web page delivery 77.

[0084]

The user browses the received Web page on the portable telephone terminal 2, and thereby selects a listed item having the link to an information providing site 20. This

permits the user to access the information providing site 20 as indicated by access 78. Thus, the information providing site 20 provides the user-desired information as a Web page to the portable telephone terminal 2.

[0085]

As such, the guidance information providing system according to the present embodiment provides guidance information in a hierarchical form. That is, in order to obtain guidance information in the one-step lower hierarchy, a telephone call is made to a telephone number listed by the guidance apparatus 1. Then, in order to obtain guidance information in the one-more-step lower hierarchy, access is made to a URL of the guidance server 3 listed in the guidance information received as an e-mail, whereby the Web page provided by the guidance server 3 is browsed, and desired information is selected. According to this method, even when the URL of the information providing site 20 of a shop, such as a department store and a boutique, holding a bargain sale of teenagers' wear, is not known, the information can be obtained on the bargain sale of teenagers' wear. On the basis of the obtained information, the user can go to the shop and purchase teenagers' wear at a low price.

[0086]

The detail of the above-mentioned operation is

described below.

[0087]

At first, the user makes a telephone call from the portable telephone terminal 2 to the guidance apparatus 1 as indicated by the telephone call 70. Figure 3(a) shows an example of telephone numbers to which a telephone call can be made from the portable telephone terminal 2. A plurality of telephone numbers to which a telephone call can be made are listed. By selecting any one of these telephone numbers and by making a telephone call thereto, the contents of the provided service is selected. In Figure 3(a), the telephone numbers are classified by local area. When a telephone call is made to 06-1234-1231, information on the Umeda area in Osaka is obtained. In contrast, when a telephone call is made to 06-1234-1232, information on the Namba area in Osaka is obtained. A telephone directory listing these telephone numbers is distributed to each user in advance. Further, when the portable telephone terminal 2 is brought to a service shop, such a telephone directory can be registered into the memory of the portable telephone terminal 2. The guidance apparatus 1 provides such information for each local area. Thus, detailed information can be provided to the user.

[0088]

It is assumed that the user is now in Umeda in Osaka,

and that the user desires to purchase teenagers' wear in Umeda in Osaka. In this case, in order to obtain information on the Umeda area in Osaka, the user makes a telephone call from the portable telephone terminal 2 to 06-1234-1231.

[0089]

The telephone call from the portable telephone terminal 2 is notified to the relay station 4 by wireless communication 13, and then notified from the relay station 4 through the telephone line 14 to the telephone receiving means 7.

[0090]

The telephone receiving means 7 notifies, to the telephone number acquiring means 8, that a telephone call is being made to the telephone number corresponding to the information on the Umeda area in Osaka.

[00911]

The telephone number acquiring means 8 acquires the telephone number of the caller, that is, the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2, by number notifying service.

[0092]

When receiving the notice that the telephone number acquiring means 8 has completed the acquisition of the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2, the telephone receiving means 7 terminates the telephone call

from the portable telephone terminal 2 without replying thereto. That is, since the telephone number acquiring means 8 acquires the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2 by number notifying service, the telephone receiving means 7 does not reply to the telephone call from the portable telephone terminal 2. Accordingly, when the portable telephone terminal 2 makes a telephone call to the guidance apparatus 1 in order to request guidance information, no telephone charge occurs newly.

[0093]

Then, the telephone number acquiring means 8 notifies the acquired telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2 to the e-mail address acquiring means 9.

[0094]

The e-mail address acquiring means 9 refers to the user information database 10, and thereby acquires the e-mail address of the addressee of the guidance information on the basis of the notified telephone number. Here, the user information database 10 stores information for corresponding the telephone number to the e-mail address. This information is generated when the user makes user registration for the use of the guidance apparatus 1.

[0095]

Then, the e-mail transmitting means 11 reads out guidance information on the Umeda area in Osaka from the

distributed information database 12, and thereby transmits the guidance information to the e-mail address acquired by the e-mail address acquiring means 9, by e-mail as indicated by e-mail transmission 71. As shown in Figure 3(b), this guidance information lists telephone numbers for selecting bargain sale information, gourmet information, sight-seeing information, and the like in the Umeda area in Osaka.

[0096]

The e-mail transmitted from the e-mail transmitting means 11 goes through the Internet 6 to the mail box for the portable telephone terminal 2 in the provider 5.

[0097]

The portable telephone terminal 2 downloads the e-mail from its own mail box in the provider 5, and then displays the e-mail on the monitor of the portable telephone terminal 2.

[0098]

Figure 4 shows an example of the e-mail displayed on the monitor of the portable telephone terminal 2. This received e-mail lists telephone numbers for selecting desired information among the information items on the Umeda area in Osaka. As shown in the figure, bargain sale information is obtained by a telephone call to 06-1234-5671. Gourmet information is obtained by a telephone call to

06-1234-5672. Sight-seeing information on hotels, inns, and tourist spots is obtained by a telephone call to 06-1234-5673. Movies information is obtained by a telephone call to 06-1234-5674.

[0099]

The user browses the e-mail displayed on the monitor of the portable telephone terminal 2, and then selects the telephone number 06-1234-5671 in which bargain sale information is obtained. In the e-mail displayed on the monitor of the ordinary portable telephone terminal 2, telephone number portions are recognized automatically and thereby displayed in a character color reversed to the character color for the other portions. Further, when the cursor is moved onto a telephone number and then the telephone number is selected, a telephone call is made to the telephone number automatically as a function of the portable telephone terminal 2.

[0100]

Using this function, the user makes a telephone call again from the portable telephone terminal 2 to the telephone number 06-1234-5671 in which bargain sale information is obtained, as indicated by the telephone call 72 in Figure 2.

[0101]

Then, the guidance apparatus 1 reads out guidance

information from the distributed information database 12 by an operation similar to the above-mentioned one, and thereby transmits the guidance information to the portable telephone terminal 2 by e-mail as indicated by e-mail transmission 73 in Figure 2.

[0102]

Figure 5 shows an example of the guidance information received as an e-mail by the portable telephone terminal 2. In the e-mail, provided information is classified as personal computers/peripheral devices, wear, and the like as shown by classifications 23. Further, URLs in each of which the information belonging to each classification 23 is obtained are listed as shown by URLs 24.

[0103]

In the ordinary portable telephone terminal 2 capable of being connected to the Internet 6, similarly to the above-mentioned case of telephone numbers, in the e-mail displayed on the monitor, URL portions are recognized automatically and thereby displayed in a character color reversed to the character color for the other portions. Further, when the cursor is moved onto a URL and then the URL is selected, the URL is accessed automatically as a function of the portable telephone terminal 2.

[0104]

The user displays the guidance information shown in

Figure 5 onto the monitor of the portable telephone terminal 2, and thereby selects a URL 24 using the above-mentioned function. Accordingly, the user accesses the guidance server 3 in the Internet 6 as indicated by access 74 in Figure 2.

[0105]

In response to the access 74 from the portable telephone terminal 2, the guidance server 3 provides the Webpage to the portable telephone terminal 2 via the Internet 6 as indicated by Web page delivery 75. Figure 6 shows an example of the Web page provided to the portable telephone terminal 2. The Web page shown in Figure 6 is a menu for selecting desired information among the information items on the bargain sales of wear held in the Umeda area in Osaka. That is, the detail of the desired bargain sale information can be selected among the items such as teenagers' wear, sportswear, and casual wear. Each item, such as teenagers' wear, sportswear, and casual wear, has a tag for referring to a Web page providing the information corresponding to the item.

[0106]

Since the user desires to obtain information on the bargain sales of teenagers' wear in the Umeda area in Osaka, the user moves the cursor and selects "teenagers' wear" on the Web page displayed on the monitor of the portable

telephone terminal 2. Then, the portable telephone terminal 2 accesses a Web page providing the information for teenagers, as indicated by access 76 in Figure 2.

[0107]

In response to the access 76 from the portable telephone terminal 2, the guidance server 2 provides the Web page to the portable telephone terminal 2 again via the Internet 6 as indicated by Web page delivery 77. Figure 7 shows an example of the Web page provided to the portable telephone terminal 2.

[0108]

This Web page introduces the Web pages of the shops providing the information on the bargain sale of teenagers' wear, among the guidance information on the Umeda area in Osaka. That is, the Web page lists: the URLs of the information providing sites 20 each holding a bargain sale of teenagers' wear as indicated by URLs 90; the names of the shops holding the bargain sales as indicated by shop names 91; and the brief descriptions thereof as indicated by descriptions 92.

[0109]

Each item of the URLs 90, shop names 91, and descriptions 92 has a link for accessing the corresponding information providing site. Accordingly, when an item is selected, access is made to the corresponding information

providing site.

[0110]

The user browses the Web page displayed on the monitor of the portable telephone terminal 2, and it is assumed that the user thinks about the purchase of jeans. Then, the user moves the cursor and selects <http://www.bcd.co.jp>. This permits the portable telephone terminal 2 to access the information providing site 20 holding a bargain sale of jeans, as indicated by access 78 in Figure 2.

[0111]

In response to the access from the portable telephone terminal 2, the information providing site 20 provides the Web page to the portable telephone terminal 2 as indicated by Web page delivery 79 in Figure 2.

[0112]

The user browses the Web page provided by the information providing site 20, and thereby obtains detailed information on jeans, such as the addresses and the telephone numbers of the shops holding the bargain sales of jeans, as well as the designs of jeans. This permits the user to think the purchase in detail.

[0113]

As such, even when a method for obtaining information on desired jeans is not known, the user can easily obtain the information on jeans by virtue of the information

distribution system according to the present embodiment.

[0114]

Further, in case that a telephone number is input manually from the portable telephone terminal 2, a numeral can be input by pressing an input button once in the portable telephone terminal 2. In contrast, in case that a URL is input manually, the URL generally contains alphabets and other signs. In this case, in order to input each single character of alphabet or other sign, the keys need to be pressed several times in the portable telephone terminal 2. Accordingly, inputting a telephone number manually is much easier and quicker than inputting a URL manually in the portable telephone terminal 2. In the present embodiment, in order to browse a Web page provided by the information providing site 20, a telephone number is manually input instead of inputting a URL. Accordingly, the present embodiment has the advantage that the operation is easier and quicker than inputting a URL manually.

[0115]

In contrast, when the user desires to obtain gourmet information in the Umeda area in Osaka, the user can make a telephone call to 06-1234-5672 as shown in Figure 4, and thereby obtain gourmet information in a manner similar to the above-mentioned case.

[0116]

Further, when the e-mails sent from the guidance apparatus 1 and the Web pages sent from the guidance server 3 are saved in the portable telephone terminal 2, those menus can be used many times in order to obtain desired information.

[0117]

For example, after the user purchased jeans in the above-mentioned manner, it is assumed that the user further desires to have a meal in the Umeda area in Osaka. In this case, the user can make a telephone call to 06-1234-5672 in which gourmet information in the Umeda area in Osaka is obtained, and thereby obtain the gourmet information immediately.

[0118]

Further, a few days later, the user goes to the Umeda area in Osaka, and it is assumed that the user desires to purchase a personal computer/peripheral device in the Umeda area in Osaka. In this case, the user displays the e-mail shown in Figure 5 which is already received from the guidance apparatus 1, and thereby selects the URL of personal computers/peripheral devices. Then, the user immediately obtains the Web page providing the guidance information on personal computers/peripheral devices.

[0119]

As such, in the present embodiment, when the e-mails

sent from the guidance apparatus 1 and the Web pages sent from the guidance server 3 are saved in the portable telephone terminal 2, those menus can be used many times in order to obtain desired information. This avoids the necessity and the time of accessing the guidance apparatus 1 and the guidance server 3 in every occasion to obtain newly desired information.

[0120]

As such, by selecting any one of the predetermined telephone numbers and by making a telephone call thereto from the portable telephone terminal 2, desired guidance information is obtained. And then, desired final information is obtained from the information providing site 20.

[0121]

The description of the present embodiment has been made for the case that when receiving the notice that the telephone number acquiring means 8 has completed the acquisition of the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2, the telephone receiving means 7 terminates the telephone call from the portable telephone terminal 2 without replying thereto. However, the invention is not restricted to this. That is, when receiving the notice that the telephone number acquiring means 8 has completed the acquisition of the telephone number

of the portable telephone terminal 2, the telephone receiving means 7 may reply to the telephone call from the portable telephone terminal 2, and then terminate the telephone call. Further, after a predetermined time duration starting from the reception of the telephone call from the portable telephone terminal 2, the telephone number acquiring means 8 may reply to and then terminate the telephone call. In this case, at the time of the reply to the telephone call from the portable telephone terminal 2, a voice message, such as "please stop your telephone call," may be sent to the portable telephone terminal 2 in order to request the portable telephone terminal 2 to stop the telephone call.

[0122]

(Embodiment 2)

Embodiment 2 is described below.

[0123]

Figure 8 shows the configuration of an information distribution system according to the present embodiment.

[0124]

The information distribution system according to the present embodiment comprises a guidance apparatus 18 in place of the guidance apparatus 1 according to Embodiment 1.

[0125]

The guidance apparatus 18 comprises telephone replying means 17 and voice guidance means 16 which are not included in Embodiment 1.

[0126]

The telephone replying means 17 is means of replying to a telephone call when receiving the telephone call.

[0127]

The voice guidance means 16 is means of carrying out voice guidance in order for the portable telephone terminal 2 to select desired guidance information.

[0128]

The other configuration is the same as that in Embodiment 1, and hence the description is omitted.

[0129]

Here, the telephone number acquiring means 8 and the telephone replying means 17 according to the present embodiment constitute an example of receiving means according to the invention.

[0130]

The operation of the present embodiment in such a configuration is described below with focusing the attention on the difference from Embodiment 1.

[0131]

Figure 9 shows interactions among the guidance apparatus 1, the portable telephone terminal 2, the

guidance server 3, and the information providing site 20.

[0132]

Similarly to Embodiment 1, it is assumed that a user goes out with carrying the portable telephone terminal 2, and that in the outside, the user desires to obtain information in order to purchase teenagers' wear at a bargain sale at a low price.

[0133]

The outline of the operation in such a case is described below. Detailed operation is described later.

[0134]

Figure 9 shows interactions among the guidance apparatus 18, the portable telephone terminal 2, the guidance server 3, and the information providing site 20. At first, the user makes a telephone call from the portable telephone terminal 2 to the guidance apparatus 18 as indicated by a telephone call 26 in Figure 9. In response to the telephone call 26, the guidance apparatus 18 transmits voice guidance as indicated by voice guidance 27. On the basis of the voice guidance 27, the portable telephone terminal 2 selects desired guidance information as indicated by menu selection 28. Then, the guidance apparatus 18 transmits selected guidance information to the portable telephone terminal 2 by e-mail as indicated by e-mail transmission 29.

[0135]

The portable telephone terminal 2 accesses a Web page according to the URL described in the received e-mail, as indicated by access 80. Then, the guidance server 3 provides the Web page utilized by the user for selecting desired information, to the portable telephone terminal 2 as indicated by Web page delivery 81.

[0136]

The user browses the Web page sent to the portable telephone terminal 2, and thereby selects desired information. Then, access is made to a Web page providing the desired information, as indicated by access 82.

[0137]

In response to the access 82, the guidance server 3 provides the Web page to the portable telephone terminal 2.

[0138]

The portable telephone terminal 2 selects the URL of an information providing site 20 in the list, and thereby accesses the information providing site 20 as indicated by access 84. That is, the address of each information providing site 20 has a link for accessing the information providing site 20.

[0139]

Then, the information providing site 20 provides the

user-desired information as a Web page to the portable telephone terminal 2.

[0140]

As such, similarly to Embodiment 1, the guidance information providing system according to the present embodiment provides guidance information in a hierarchical form. The difference is that the guidance apparatus 18 provides a part of the hierarchical guidance information as voice guidance.

[0141]

According to this method, even when the URL of the information providing site 20 of a shop, such as a department store and a boutique, holding a bargain sale of teenagers' wear, is not known, the information can be obtained on the bargain sale of teenagers' wear. On the basis of the obtained information, the user can go to the shop and purchase teenagers' wear at a low price.

The detail of the above-mentioned operation is described below.

[0142]

Figure 10(a) shows the classification of provided information for each local area. Similarly to Embodiment 1, it is assumed that the user desires to obtain information on the bargain sales of wear in the Umeda area in Osaka.

[0143]

Then, the portable telephone terminal 2 makes a telephone call to 06-1234-1231 as indicated by a telephone call 26.

[0144]

The telephone replying means 17 replies to the telephone call. The telephone replying means 17 notifies, to the voice guidance means 16, that the telephone call is replied.

[0145]

On receiving the notification, the voice guidance means 16 sends voice guidance as indicated by voice guidance 27 in Figure 9.

[0146]

On the basis of the voice guidance 27, the user of the portable telephone terminal 2 selects desired information as indicated by menu selection 28 in Figure 9.

[0147]

Figure 10 shows an example in which desired guidance information is selected on the basis of voice guidance.

[0148]

At first, the voice guidance apparatus 16 guides so as to input numeral 1 in the portable telephone terminal 2 for selecting the bargain sale information, and similarly, numeral 2 for gourmet information, numeral 3 for

sight-seeing information, and numeral 4 for movies information.

[0149]

It is assumed that the user of the portable telephone terminal 2 inputs numeral 1 on the basis of the voice guidance.

[0150]

On receiving numeral 1 from the portable telephone terminal 2, the voice guidance means 16 notifies the completion of the voice guidance, to the telephone replying means 17. In response to this notification, the telephone replying means 17 terminates the telephone call with the portable telephone terminal 2.

[0151]

Then, the voice guidance means 16 notifies the selected guidance information to the e-mail transmitting means 11 as indicated by e-mail transmission 29 in Figure 9.

[0152]

On the other hand, similarly to Embodiment 1, the telephone number acquiring means 8 acquires the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2 by number notifying service, and then notifies the telephone number to the e-mail address acquiring means 9.

[0153]

Similarly to Embodiment 1, the e-mail address

acquiring means 9 acquires the e-mail address of the portable telephone terminal 2, and then notifies the e-mail address to the e-mail transmitting means 11.

[0154]

The e-mail transmitting means 11 reads out, from the distributed information database 12, the guidance information on bargain sale information notified from the voice guidance means 16, and thereby transmits the guidance information to the e-mail address acquired by the e-mail address acquiring means 9, by e-mail as indicated by e-mail transmission 29.

[0155]

The operation subsequent to this is the same as that of Embodiment 1, and hence the description is omitted.

[0156]

As such, according to the present embodiment, desired information can be selected on the basis of voice guidance.

[0157]

(Embodiment 3)

Embodiment 3 is described below.

[0158]

Figure 11 shows the configuration of an information distribution system according to the present embodiment.

[0159]

In the information distribution system according to

the present embodiment, a difference from that of Embodiment 1 is that a portable telephone terminal 65 does not have the function of connection to the Internet.

[0160]

Further, an e-mail server 64 is a server used by the portable telephone terminal 65 and a guidance apparatus 1 for the purpose of exchanging e-mails.

[0161]

The other configuration is the same as that in Embodiment 1, and hence the description is omitted.

[0162]

Here, guidance information, such as an e-mail, transmitted from the guidance apparatus 61 to the portable telephone terminal 2 according to the present embodiment is an example of first information according to the invention. The e-mail transmitting means 62 and the distributed information database 63 according to the present embodiment constitute an example of information distributing means according to the invention. The telephone number acquiring means 8 and the telephone receiving means 7 according to the present embodiment constitute an example of receiving means according to the invention.

[0163]

The operation of the present embodiment in such a configuration is described below with focusing the

attention on the difference from Embodiment 1.

[0164]

Figure 12 shows interactions between the portable telephone terminal 65 and the guidance apparatus 61. In the present embodiment, similarly to Embodiment 1, description is made for the case that a user uses the portable telephone terminal 65 and obtains information on the bargain sales of teenagers' wear in the Umeda area in Osaka, thereby thinking the purchase of jeans.

[0165]

The user makes a telephone call from the portable telephone terminal 2 to 06-1234-1231 shown in Figure 3(a), as indicated by a telephone call 95 in Figure 12.

[0166]

Then, the guidance apparatus 1 transmits an e-mail describing the contents shown in Figure 4, to the portable telephone terminal 2 as indicated by e-mail transmission

96. The e-mail is transmitted to the portable telephone terminal 65 via the e-mail server 64.

[0167]

Then, the user makes a telephone call, among the telephone numbers shown in Figure 4, to the telephone number 06-1234-5671 in which bargain sale information is obtained, as indicated by a telephone call 97 in Figure 12. The above-mentioned operation is the same as that of Embodiment

1, except that the e-mail server 64 processes the reception of the e-mail..

[0168]

Then, the guidance apparatus 1 transmits the guidance information on bargain sale information to the portable telephone terminal 65 by e-mail as indicated by e-mail transmission 98..

[0169]

Figure 13 shows the guidance information sent to the portable telephone terminal 65. In this e-mail, in contrast to that of Embodiment 1, telephone numbers are listed in place of URLs.

[0170]

The user makes a telephone call to the telephone number 06-1234-3212 in which guidance information on wear is obtained, as indicated by a telephone call 99 in Figure 12.

[0171]

Then, the guidance apparatus 61 transmits an e-mail describing the information on the bargain sales of wear in the Umeda area in Osaka, to the portable telephone terminal 65 by e-mail as indicated by e-mail transmission 100 in Figure 12.

[0172]

Figure 14 shows an example of the received e-mail.

The e-mail lists the bargain sale information of wear, with classifying the information as teenagers' wear, sportswear, and the like. On the basis of the received bargain sale information, the user finds that a shop ○△ sells jeans at a low price.

[0173]

(Embodiment 4)

Embodiment 4 is described below.

[0174]

The configuration of an information distribution system according to the present embodiment is the same as that of Embodiment 1.

[0175]

The difference of the present embodiment from Embodiment 1 is that the final information obtained by the user is transmitted as an e-mail from the guidance server 3.

[0176]

The other operation is the same as that in Embodiment 1, and hence the description is omitted.

[0177]

The operation of the present embodiment in such a configuration is described below with focusing the attention on the difference from Embodiment 1.

[0178]

Figure 15 shows interactions among the guidance apparatus 1, the portable telephone terminal 2, and the guidance server 3.

[0179]

At first, the user makes a telephone call from the portable telephone terminal 2 to 06-1234-1231 in order to obtain information on the Umeda area in Osaka, as indicated by a telephone call 101 in Figure 15.

[0180]

Then, the guidance apparatus 1 transmits an e-mail describing the contents shown in Figure 4, to the portable telephone terminal 2 as indicated by e-mail transmission 102 in Figure 15.

[0181]

The user makes a telephone call from the portable telephone terminal 2 to the telephone number 06-1234-5671 in which bargain sale information is obtained as shown in Figure 4, as indicated by a telephone call 103 in Figure 15.

[0182]

Then, the guidance apparatus 1 transmits an e-mail describing the contents shown in Figure 5, to the portable telephone terminal 2 as indicated by e-mail transmission 104 in Figure 15.

[0183]

On the basis of the received e-mail, access is made to a Web page in the guidance server 3 providing the bargain sale information of wear, as indicated by access 105 in Figure 15.

[0184]

Then, the guidance server 3 transmits a Web page shown in Figure 6, to the portable telephone terminal 2 as indicated by Web page transmission 108 in Figure 15.

[0185]

The above-mentioned operation is the same as that of Embodiment 1.

[0186]

Then, the portable telephone terminal 2 selects "teenagers' wear" in the Web page shown in Figure 6, and thereby requests an e-mail describing the information on teenagers' wear, as indicated by e-mail request 106 in Figure 15.

[0187]

Then, the guidance server 3 transmits the bargain sale information of teenagers' wear, to the portable telephone terminal 2 by e-mail as indicated by e-mail transmission 107 in Figure 15.

[0188]

Figure 16 shows an example of the received e-mail. In Figure 16, for simplicity in illustration, it is assumed

that the e-mail lists shop names, their telephone numbers, and brief descriptions. However, the e-mail may actually list more detailed descriptions such as detailed descriptions of respective bargain articles.

[0189]

On the basis of this e-mail, the user thinks the purchase of jeans similarly to Embodiment 1.

[0190]

(Embodiment 5)

Embodiment 5 is described below.

[0191]

Figure 17 shows the configuration of an information distribution system according to the present embodiment.

[0192]

A guidance apparatus 30 according to the present embodiment comprises e-mail address acquiring means 31, a posterior registration table 32, virtual e-mail address generating means 33, and a virtual e-mail address generating rule 34 in place of the e-mail address acquiring means 9 and the user information database 10 according to Embodiment 1.

[0193]

The virtual e-mail address generating rule 34 is a rule for generating an e-mail address for a portable telephone terminal 2 from the telephone number of the

portable telephone terminal 2.

[0194]

The virtual e-mail address generating means 33 is means of generating a virtual e-mail address which is an e-mail address corresponding to a portable telephone terminal 2, from the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2 on the basis of the virtual e-mail address generating rule 34.

[0195]

Here, the virtual e-mail address according to the present embodiment is an e-mail address, however, a portable telephone terminal 2 corresponding to this e-mail address may not necessarily exist. Accordingly, when an e-mail is transmitted to a virtual e-mail address, the transmission is successful in some cases, but the transmission fails when no corresponding mail box exists.

[0196]

The posterior registration table 32 is a table in which when the above-mentioned e-mail transmission to a virtual e-mail address is successful, the virtual e-mail address is registered such as to be corresponded to the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2.

[0197]

The e-mail address acquiring means 31 is means of acquiring the e-mail address of a portable telephone

terminal 2 by searching the posterior registration table 32, when the e-mail address of the portable telephone terminal 2 is already registered in the posterior registration table 32.

[0198]

Here, the posterior registration table 32 according to the present embodiment is an example of a second table according to the invention. The e-mail transmitting means 11, the distributed information database 12, and the transmission result determining means 35 according to the present embodiment constitute an example of information distributing means according to the invention. The e-mail address acquiring means 9, the posterior registration table 32, the virtual e-mail address generating means 33, and the virtual e-mail address generating rule 34 according to the present embodiment constitute an example of e-mail address generating means according to the invention. The telephone number acquiring means 8 and the telephone receiving means 7 according to the present embodiment constitute an example of receiving means according to the invention.

[0199]

The operation of the present embodiment in such a configuration is described below with focusing the attention on the difference from Embodiment 1.

[0200]

When there is not yet any telephone call from any portable telephone terminal 2, the posterior registration table 32 is not yet generated in the guidance apparatus 30. Obviously, neither telephone number of a portable telephone terminal 2 nor e-mail address corresponding to the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2 is registered yet.

[0201]

Interactions among the guidance apparatus 30, the portable telephone terminal 2, the guidance server 3, and the information providing site 20 are those shown in Figure 2 similarly to Embodiment 1. That is, in the following description, the guidance apparatus 1 shown in Figure 2 is to be read as the guidance apparatus 30.

[0202]

Similarly to Embodiment 1, it is assumed that a user goes out with carrying the portable telephone terminal 2.

[0203]

Further, it is assumed that in the outside, the user desires to find a shop holding a bargain sale and thereby purchase teenagers' wear at a low price.

[0204]

In such a case, at first, the user makes a telephone call from the portable telephone terminal 2 to the guidance

apparatus 30 as indicated by a telephone call 70 in Figure 2.

[0205]

At first, the user makes a telephone call from the portable telephone terminal 2 to the guidance apparatus 1 as indicated by a telephone call 70 in Figure 2. Similarly to Embodiment 1, Figure 3(a) shows an example of telephone numbers to which a telephone call can be made from the portable telephone terminal 2.

[0206]

It is assumed that the user is now in Umeda in Osaka, and that the user desires to purchase teenagers' wear in Umeda in Osaka. Thus, in order to obtain information on the Umeda area in Osaka, the user makes a telephone call from the portable telephone terminal 2 to 06-1234-1231.

[0207]

The telephone call from the portable telephone terminal 2 is notified to the relay station 4 by wireless communication 13, and then notified from the relay station 4 through the telephone line 14 to the telephone receiving means 7.

[0208]

The telephone receiving means 7 notifies, to the telephone number acquiring means 8, that a telephone call is being made to the telephone number corresponding to the

information on the Umeda area in Osaka.

[0209]

The telephone number acquiring means 8 acquires the telephone number of the caller, that is, the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2, by number notifying service.

[0210]

When receiving the notice that the telephone number acquiring means 8 has completed the acquisition of the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2, the telephone receiving means 7 terminates the telephone call from the portable telephone terminal 2.

[0211]

Then, the telephone number acquiring means 8 notifies the acquired telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2 to the e-mail address acquiring means 9.

[0212]

In the initial state in which the posterior registration table 32 is not yet generated, the e-mail address acquiring means 31 notifies, to the telephone number notifying means 8, that no e-mail address corresponding to the acquired telephone number is not acquired.

[0213]

On receiving the notification from the e-mail address acquiring means 31, the telephone number acquiring means

8 notifies the acquired telephone number to the virtual e-mail address generating means 33.

[0214]

The virtual e-mail address generating means 33 generates a virtual e-mail address from the notified telephone number on the basis of the virtual e-mail address generating rule 34 as described below.

[0215]

That is, the telephone company assigns an e-mail address to the portable telephone terminal 2 the communications service of which is provided by the company, on the basis of the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2 according to a predetermined rule. An example of such rule is that an e-mail address "telephone number@domain name" is assigned to the portable telephone terminal 2.

[0216]

More specifically, when the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2 is "09012345678", and when the domain name of the telephone company providing the service to the portable telephone terminal 2 is "abc.ne.jp", an e-mail address "12345678@abc.ne.jp" is assigned.

[0217]

Here, the domain name used in such e-mail addresses is different depending on each telephone company. In

telephone company A, a different domain name is used for each local area where the user of the portable telephone terminal 2 resides. In contrast, in telephone company B, a plurality of domain names are used. And, any one of the domain names is selected, for example, depending on the type of contract with the user of the portable telephone terminal 2, whereby the e-mail address of the portable telephone terminal 2 is generated as the combination of the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2 and the selected domain name. In telephone company C, a single domain name is used.

[0218]

Thus, specifically speaking, the virtual e-mail address generating rule 34 is a rule in which a virtual e-mail address is generated as the combination of the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2 and a domain name used in the telephone company, as described above. Accordingly, a single domain name or a plurality of domain names may be used in a single telephone company or a single branch thereof.

[0219]

As such, the virtual e-mail address generating means 33 generates a virtual e-mail address by combining the telephone number notified from the telephone number acquiring means 8 with the domain name used in the telephone

company or a branch thereof according to the virtual e-mail address generating rule 34. At this time, the virtual e-mail address generating means 33 generates virtual e-mail addresses using not only the domain name used in the telephone company or the branch thereof providing the communications service to the portable telephone terminal 2 but also the domain names used in the other telephone companies or the branches thereof.

[0220]

Accordingly, the virtual e-mail addresses generated according to the virtual e-mail address generating rules 34 exist in a number equal to that of the domain names used in all the telephone companies and the branches thereof.

[0221]

As such, the virtual e-mail address generating means 33 generates all possible virtual e-mail addresses according to the virtual e-mail address generating rules 34 each used for generating an e-mail address from a telephone number in a telephone company.

[0222]

The virtual e-mail address generating means 33 notifies the generated virtual e-mail addresses to the e-mail transmitting means 11.

[0223]

Then, the e-mail transmitting means 11 reads out

guidance information on the Umeda area in Osaka from the distributed information database 12, and thereby transmits the guidance information to all the virtual e-mail addresses notified from the virtual e-mail address generating means 33, by e-mail as indicated by e-mail transmission 71 in Figure 2.

[0224]

For example, when eight virtual e-mail addresses are notified, the e-mail transmitting means 11 transmits the guidance information by e-mail to each of the eight e-mail addresses. When a virtual e-mail address coincides with the e-mail address of the portable telephone terminal 2, the e-mail transmitted from the e-mail transmitting means 11 to the virtual e-mail address reaches the mail box for the portable telephone terminal 2 in the provider 5, via the Internet 6. In case that the rule for generating an e-mail address from the telephone number is not unified, that is, in case that any one of a plurality of possible e-mail addresses is assigned to the telephone number, an e-mail is transmitted to every virtual e-mail address possible to be assigned to the telephone number. Accordingly, one and only one e-mail securely reaches the e-mail address actually assigned to the portable telephone terminal 2.

[0225]

In the e-mail transmission, the e-mail transmitting means 11 changes the amount and/or the contents of the guidance information for each virtual e-mail address used in the transmission, according to the virtual e-mail address generating rules 34.

[0226]

That is, on the basis of each virtual e-mail address generated according to the virtual e-mail address generating rules 34, the telephone company or the branch thereof is identified. Further, the type of the portable telephone terminal 2 provided by the telephone company is identified. In case that the identified type does not have the function that the selecting of an e-mail address or a URL in the text of the displayed e-mail causes a telephone call to the telephone number or access to a Web page corresponding to the URL, a message, such as "please input a URL listed in the text" and "please make a telephone call to a telephone number listed in the text," is inserted into the guidance information.

[0227]

In case that the identified type has such a function, a message, such as "please select a URL listed in the text" and "please select a telephone number listed in the text," is inserted into the guidance information.

[0228]

Further, in case that the guidance information having such a message inserted exceeds the limit of the number of characters which can be received by the identified type, the number of characters in the guidance information is reduced, and then the guidance information is transmitted by e-mail. As such, the e-mail transmitting means 11 changes the amount and/or the contents of the transmitted guidance information depending on each telephone number and each virtual e-mail address.

[0229]

The e-mail transmitting means 11 notifies, to the transmission result determining means 35, the telephone number notified from the telephone number acquiring means 8 and the virtual e-mail address to which the e-mail is transmitted.

[0230]

In case that the virtual e-mail address does not coincide with the e-mail address of the portable telephone terminal 2, the provider 5 transmits an error message indicating that the e-mail is not deliverable, to the e-mail address of the guidance apparatus 30.

[0231]

That is, when the e-mail transmitting means 11 transmits to a plurality of virtual e-mail addresses, at least one virtual e-mail address coincides with the e-mail

address of the portable telephone terminal 2. Accordingly, the portable telephone terminal 2 can receive an e-mail transmitted from the e-mail transmitting means 11.

[0232]

On the other hand, when receiving an error reply e-mail transmitted from the provider 5, the transmission result determining means 35 analyzes the header portion of the e-mail address, and thereby identifies that the e-mail is not an ordinary e-mail but an error reply e-mail. Further, identified is the virtual e-mail address to which the original e-mail is transmitted.

[0233]

Such identification is carried out as follows. The header portion of an e-mail via the Internet describes the e-mail address of the sender and the e-mail address of the addressee. The header portion further describes the names of all servers having relayed the e-mail, between the server having transmitted the e-mail and the server having received the e-mail.

[0234]

Accordingly, when the e-mail addresses of the sender and the addressee are acquired from the header portion of the e-mail, found is the virtual e-mail address to which the guidance apparatus 30 has transmitted an e-mail. Further, in case that the header portion of the e-mail

describes both: the route between the server used for the e-mail transmission by the guidance apparatus 30 and the provider 5; and the route between the provider 5 and the server used for the e-mail reception by the guidance apparatus 30; the e-mail is determined as an error reply e-mail. Thus, a virtual e-mail address not found in the header portions of such error reply e-mails is determined as a successful e-mail address for e-mail transmission.

[0235]

In the above-mentioned description, the transmission result determining means 35 has analyzed the header portion of a received e-mail in order to determine whether the e-mail is an error reply e-mail or not. However, the invention is not restricted to this. The title or the text of the received e-mail may be analyzed in order to determine whether the e-mail is an error reply e-mail or not.

[0236]

As such, the transmission result determining means 35 determines whether the e-mail transmission was successful or not, for each virtual e-mail address.

[0237]

Then, when among the virtual e-mail addresses, there is an e-mail the transmission of which was successful, the transmission result determining means 35 generates a posterior registration table 32 newly, and then registers

the virtual e-mail address to which the e-mail transmission was successful, into the posterior registration table 32 in the form corresponded to the telephone number notified from the e-mail transmitting means 11.

[0238]

When the posterior registration table 32 is already generated, and when a virtual e-mail address to which the e-mail transmission was unsuccessful is already registered in the posterior registration table 32, the virtual e-mail address is deleted from the posterior registration table 32.

[0239]

On the other hand, the portable telephone terminal 2 downloads the e-mail transmitted from the e-mail transmitting means 11, from its own mail box in the provider 5, and then displays the e-mail on the monitor of the portable telephone terminal 2.

[0240]

Figure 4 shows an example of the e-mail displayed on the monitor of the portable telephone terminal 2. The user browses the e-mail displayed on the monitor of the portable telephone terminal 2, and then selects the telephone number 06-1234-5671 in which bargain sale information is obtained.

[0241]

The user makes a telephone call again from the portable

telephone terminal 2 to the telephone number 06-1234-5671 in which bargain sale information is obtained, as indicated by a telephone call 72 in Figure 2.

[0242]

Then, similarly to the case of the telephone call 70, the telephone number acquiring means 8 notifies the acquired telephone number to the e-mail address acquiring means 31.

[0243]

On receiving the telephone number from the telephone number acquiring means 8, the e-mail address acquiring means 31 searches the posterior registration table 32 already generated, and thereby acquires an e-mail address corresponding to the notified telephone number, that is, the e-mail address of the portable telephone terminal 2.

[0244]

The e-mail address acquiring means 31 then notifies the acquired e-mail address of the portable telephone terminal 2 to the e-mail transmitting means 11.

[0245]

Then, similarly to the above-mentioned case, the e-mail transmitting means 11 reads out guidance information from the distributed information database 12, and thereby transmits the guidance information to the notified e-mail address of the portable telephone terminal 2 by e-mail as indicated by e-mail transmission 73 in Figure 2. Then,

similarly to the above-mentioned case, the transmission result determining means 35 determines whether the e-mail transmission was successful or not, and thereby updates the posterior registration table 32 on the basis of the determination result.

[0246]

After that, interactions shown in Figure 2 are carried out among the information providing site 20, the guidance server 3, the portable telephone terminal 2, and the guidance apparatus 30. These interactions are already described in detail in Embodiment 1, and hence the description is omitted.

[0247]

As described above, according to the present embodiment, even in case that a user is not registered in advance, the portable telephone terminal 2 can use the guidance apparatus 30. Further, into the posterior registration table 34, at the first time when the guidance information is distributed, an e-mail address to which the distribution was successful is registered into the posterior registration table 32 in the form corresponded to the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2. Accordingly, when guidance information is distributed in subsequent steps, the appropriate e-mail address is obtained by searching the posterior registration table 32.

Thus, when the portable telephone terminal 2 uses the guidance apparatus 36 twice or more, useless distribution of guidance information to the invalid virtual e-mail addresses is avoided.

[0248]

In the present embodiment, even in case that the posterior registration table 32, the e-mail address acquiring means 31, and the transmission result determining means 35 are removed from the guidance apparatus 30, the same effect as that of Embodiment 1 is obtained. In this case, the system configuration becomes simpler. Further, the search for an e-mail address corresponding to the telephone number is not necessary. This speeds up the distribution of guidance information.

[0249]

The description of the present embodiment has been made for the case that the virtual e-mail address generating means 33 generates, from the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2, all possible virtual e-mail addresses which may be assigned by the telephone companies and the branches thereof. However, the invention is not restricted to this.

[0250]

That is, a list showing which telephone number is assigned to which telephone company is made public by the

Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications. Accordingly, by referring to this list, one can identify the telephone company providing the communications service to the portable telephone terminal 2, and even the branch thereof providing the communications service in which local area.

[0251]

The list showing which telephone number is assigned to which telephone company may be used as a virtual e-mail address generating rule 34.

[0252]

In other words, as virtual e-mail address generating rules 34, a first rule is set such that the telephone company providing the communications service to the portable telephone terminal 2 and the branch thereof providing the communications service in the local area are identified from the telephone number. Then, another rule is set such that the domain name used in the identified telephone company is identified. Here, it should be noted that a domain name or a plurality of domain names may be used by the telephone company or the branch thereof identified by the telephone number, as described above.

[0253]

Then, at first, according to the telephone number assigning rule of the above-mentioned virtual e-mail address generating rules 34, on the basis of the telephone

number of the portable telephone terminal 2, the virtual e-mail address generating means 33 identifies the telephone company and the branch thereof providing the communications service to the telephone number. Then, the domain name used in the identified telephone company or branch thereof is identified, whereby a virtual e-mail address may be generated by combining the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2 with the identified domain name. This reduces the number of e-mails transmitted by the e-mail transmitting means 11 at a time.

[0254]

Further, the description of the present embodiment has been made for the case that the type of the portable telephone terminal 2 is identified from the virtual e-mail address, and that the amount and/or the contents of the information transmitted by e-mail is thereby changed depending on each virtual e-mail address. However, the invention is not restricted to this. For example, similarly to the above-mentioned modified case in which the virtual e-mail address generating rules 34 include a rule for identifying, from the telephone number, the telephone company or the branch thereof providing the communications service to the portable telephone terminal 2 to which the telephone number is assigned, the telephone company or the branch thereof may be identified from the telephone number

of the portable telephone terminal 2. Then, the type of the portable telephone terminal 2 used in the identified telephone company or branch thereof may be identified, whereby the amount and/or the contents of the information transmitted by e-mail may be changed depending on the identified type. That is, the amount and/or the contents of the information transmitted by e-mail may be changed depending on the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2. In summary, the amount and/or the contents of the information transmitted by e-mail may be changed depending on at least one or more of the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2, the virtual e-mail address generating rules 34, and the generated virtual e-mail addresses.

[0255]

(Embodiment 6)

Embodiment 6 is described below.

[0256]

Figure 18 shows the configuration of an information distribution system according to the present embodiment.

[0257]

The information distribution system according to the present embodiment further comprises an anterior registration table 38 in addition to the information distribution system.

[0258]

The anterior registration table 38 is similar to the user information database 10 described in Embodiment 1. And, this is a table for storing the information of the users who may use the guidance apparatus 36, and for corresponding the telephone number of a portable telephone terminal 2 to the e-mail address.

[0259]

The other configuration is the same as that of Embodiment 5.

[0260]

Here, the anterior registration table 38 according to the present embodiment is an example of a first table according to the invention. The posterior registration table 32 according to the present embodiment is an example of a second table according to the invention. The e-mail transmitting means 11, the distributed information database 12, and the transmission result determining means 35 according to the present embodiment constitute an example of information distributing means according to the invention. The e-mail address acquiring means 9, the posterior registration table 32, the anterior registration table 38, the virtual e-mail address generating means 33, and the virtual e-mail address generating rule 34 according to the present embodiment constitute an example of e-mail

address generating means according to the invention. The telephone number acquiring means 8 and the telephone receiving means 7 according to the present embodiment constitute an example of receiving means according to the invention.

[0261]

Further, the guidance apparatus 36 according to the present embodiment is an example of an information distribution apparatus according to the invention. The anterior registration table 38 according to the present embodiment is an example of a first table according to the invention. The transmission result determining means 35 and the e-mail transmitting means 11 according to the present embodiment constitute an example of e-mail transmitting means 11 according to the invention.

[0262]

The operation of the present embodiment in such a configuration is described below with focusing the attention on the difference from Embodiment 5.

[0263]

In the present embodiment, the posterior registration table 32 is already generated. However, the portable telephone terminal 2 does not yet use the guidance apparatus 36. Accordingly, no information on the portable telephone terminal 2 is not yet registered in the posterior

registration table 32. Further, it is assumed that the user of the portable telephone terminal 2 has completed user registration. Accordingly, the anterior registration table 38 already stores information for corresponding the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2 to the e-mail address thereof.

[0264]

Interactions among the guidance apparatus 36, the portable telephone terminal 2, the guidance server 3, and the information providing site 20 are those shown in Figure 2 similarly to Embodiment 1. That is, in the following description, the guidance apparatus 1 shown in Figure 2 is to be read as the guidance apparatus 36.

[0265]

Similarly to Embodiment 1, it is assumed that a user goes out with carrying the portable telephone terminal 2.

[0266]

It is assumed that the user goes out with carrying the portable telephone terminal 2. Further, it is assumed that in the outside, the user desires to find a shop holding a bargain sale and thereby purchase teenagers' wear at a low price.

[0267]

In such a case, at first, the user makes a telephone call from the portable telephone terminal 2 to the guidance

apparatus 36 as indicated by a telephone call 70 in Figure 2.

[0268]

In a manner similar to Embodiment 5, the telephone number acquiring means 8 acquires the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2, by number notifying service.

[0269]

Then, the telephone number acquiring means 8 notifies the acquired telephone number to the virtual e-mail address generating means 33, the e-mail address acquiring means 37, and the e-mail transmitting means 11.

[0270]

In a manner similar to Embodiment 5, the virtual e-mail address generating means 33 generates virtual e-mail addresses from the notified telephone number according to the virtual e-mail address generating rules 34, and then notifies the generated virtual e-mail addresses to the e-mail transmitting means 11.

[0271]

On the other hand, the e-mail address acquiring means 37 searches the anterior registration table 38 and the posterior registration table 32 on the basis of the notified telephone number, and thereby acquires an e-mail address corresponding to the notified telephone number. At present,

the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2 is not yet registered in the posterior registration table 32, but is already registered in the anterior registration table 38. Accordingly, the e-mail address acquiring means 37 acquires the e-mail address of the portable telephone terminal 2 from the anterior registration table 38. The e-mail address acquiring means 37 then notifies the acquired e-mail address to the e-mail transmitting means 11.

[0272]

Then, the e-mail transmitting means 11 reads out guidance information from the distributed information database 12, and thereby transmits the guidance information to the virtual e-mail addresses notified from the virtual e-mail address generating means 33 and to the e-mail address notified from the e-mail address acquiring means 37, by e-mail as indicated by e-mail transmission 71 in Figure 2.

[0273]

Here, in the e-mail transmission, when there are two or more identical e-mail addresses among the virtual e-mail addresses notified from the virtual e-mail address generating means 33 and the e-mail address notified from the e-mail address acquiring means 37, the e-mail transmitting means 11 transmits only one e-mail to the e-mail address in question..

[0274]

On completion of the e-mail transmission to all the virtual e-mail addresses and the e-mail address, the e-mail transmitting means 11 notifies: the telephone number acquired from the telephone number acquiring means 8; and the virtual e-mail addresses and the e-mail address thereof; to the transmission result determining means 35.

[0275]

The transmission result determining means 35 receives error reply e-mails returned from the provider 5 and the like, then analyzes the header portions of the replied e-mails, and thereby determines whether the e-mail transmission was successful or not.

[0276]

On the basis of the determination result, the transmission result determining means 35 updates the posterior registration table 32.

[0277]

That is, when a virtual e-mail address was successful in the e-mail transmission, the transmission result determining means 35 registers the virtual e-mail address which was successful in the e-mail transmission, into the posterior registration table 32 in the form corresponded to the telephone number notified from the e-mail transmitting means 11.

[0278]

Further, when the posterior registration table 32 is already generated, and when a virtual e-mail address which was unsuccessful in the e-mail transmission is already registered in the posterior registration table 32, the virtual e-mail address is deleted from the posterior registration table 32.

[0279]

When an e-mail address which was unsuccessful in the e-mail transmission is already registered in the anterior registration table 38, the transmission result determining means 35 transmits an e-mail for notifying the unsuccessful e-mail address to the portable telephone terminal 2, via the e-mail transmitting means 11 to the e-mail address which was successful in the e-mail transmission. This e-mail carries a message that when the e-mail is returned intact, the registered contents in the anterior registration table 38 is updated for the user.

[0280]

Accordingly, only when the e-mail is returned intact, and when an e-mail address which was unsuccessful in the e-mail transmission is already registered in the anterior registration table 38, the transmission result determining means 35 updates the existing e-mail address into the e-mail address which was successful in the e-mail transmission.

[0281]

Similarly to Embodiment 5, the user makes a telephone call again from the portable telephone terminal 2 to the telephone number 06-1234-5671 in which bargain sale information is obtained, as indicated by a telephone call 72 in Figure 2.

[0282]

Then, similarly to the case of the telephone call 70, the telephone number acquiring means 8 notifies the acquired telephone number to the e-mail address acquiring means 31.

[0283]

On receiving the telephone number from the telephone number acquiring means 8, the e-mail address acquiring means 31 notifies the acquired telephone number to the virtual e-mail address generating means 33, the e-mail address acquiring means 37 and the e-mail transmitting means 11.

[0284]

Similarly to the case of the telephone call 70, the virtual e-mail address generating means 33 generates virtual e-mail addresses according to the virtual e-mail address generating rules 34, and thereby notifies the virtual e-mail addresses to the e-mail transmitting means 11.

[0285]

The e-mail address acquiring means 37 acquires the

e-mail addresses of the portable telephone terminal 2 from the posterior registration table 32 and the anterior registration table 38, and thereby notifies the e-mail addresses to the e-mail transmitting means 11.

[0286]

Then, the e-mail transmitting means 11 transmits e-mails to the notified virtual e-mail addresses and e-mail addresses as indicated by e-mail transmission 73 in Figure 2.

[0287]

Here, when there are two or more identical e-mail addresses among the notified virtual e-mail addresses and e-mail addresses, the e-mail transmitting means 11 transmits only one e-mail to the e-mail address in question, similarly to the above-mentioned case.

[0288]

After that, interactions shown in Figure 2 are carried out among the information providing site 20, the guidance server 3, the portable telephone terminal 2, and the guidance apparatus 36, with repeating the above-mentioned processes. These interactions are already described in detail in Embodiment 1, and hence the description is omitted.

[0289]

As such, the present embodiment has effects similar to that of Embodiment 5. Further, the following advantage

is also obtained.

[0290]

That is, in case that the e-mail address of the portable telephone terminal 2 is acquired from the user information database 10 similarly to Embodiment 1, the user of the portable telephone terminal 2 needs to update the e-mail address registered in the user information database 10 when the user has changed the registered e-mail address, or when the type of the portable telephone terminal 2 is changed and thereby the telephone number is changed. Thus, when the user forgets the update, the user cannot use the guidance apparatus 1.

[0291]

In contrast, in the present embodiment, e-mails are transmitted to the virtual e-mail addresses generated according to the virtual e-mail address generating rules 34 as well as to the e-mail addresses acquired from the posterior registration table 32 and the anterior registration table 38. Accordingly, even when the user forgets to update the anterior registration table 38 when the e-mail address of the portable telephone terminal 2 is changed, the portable telephone terminal 2 can still use the guidance apparatus 36. Further, the transmission result determining means 35 generates an e-mail for confirmation of the update of the anterior registration

table 38, and then transmits the e-mail to the portable telephone terminal 2. Accordingly, the portable telephone terminal 2 can simply return the e-mail to the guidance apparatus 36, and thereby update the e-mail address registered in the anterior registration table 38.

[0292]

As such, in case that the guidance apparatus 36 provides various additional services to the portable telephone terminal 2 by e-mail on the basis of the information in the anterior registration table 38, even when the user of the portable telephone terminal 2 forgets to update the e-mail address registered in the anterior registration table 38, the user can receive the additional services continuously. Here, such additional services include: the distribution of commercial messages from the companies having a contract with the guidance apparatus 36; and the distribution of prize information and obtained-points information from the companies.

[0293]

The description of the present embodiment has been made for the case that in the update of the e-mail address registered in the anterior registration table 38, the transmission result determining means 35 transmits an e-mail for confirmation of the update to the portable telephone terminal 2. However, the invention is not

restricted to this. That is, without transmitting an e-mail for confirmation of the update of the e-mail address registered in the anterior registration table 38, the transmission result determining means 35 may update the e-mail address which was unsuccessful in the e-mail transmission, in the anterior registration table 38.

[0294]

(Embodiment 7)

Embodiment 7 is described below.

[0295]

Figure 19 shows the configuration of an information distribution system according to the present embodiment.

[0296]

The information distribution system according to the present embodiment comprises virtual e-mail address generating means 41 and e-mail address acquiring means 40 in place of the virtual e-mail address generating means 33 and the e-mail address acquiring means 37 according to Embodiment 6.

[0297]

The virtual e-mail address generating means 41 is means of generating virtual e-mail addresses from a telephone number notified from the telephone number acquiring means 8, according to the virtual e-mail address generating rules 34 similarly to Embodiment 6.

[0298]

The e-mail address acquiring means 40 is means of acquiring an e-mail address corresponding to the telephone number notified from the telephone number acquiring means 8, by searching the posterior registration table 32 and the anterior registration table 38 similarly to Embodiment 6.

[0299]

The difference of the present embodiment from Embodiment 1 is that only when the e-mail address acquiring means 40 cannot acquire an e-mail address corresponding to the telephone number notified from the telephone number acquiring means 8, the virtual e-mail address generating means 41 generates virtual e-mail addresses.

[0300]

The other configuration is the same as that of Embodiment 6.

[0301]

Here, the e-mail address acquiring means 40, the posterior registration table 32, the anterior registration table 38, the virtual e-mail address generating means 41, and the virtual e-mail address generating rules 34 according to the present embodiment constitute an example of e-mail address generating means according to the invention.

[0302]

The operation of the present embodiment in such a configuration is described below with focusing the attention on the difference from Embodiment 6.

[0303]

In the present embodiment, the posterior registration table 32 is already generated. However, the portable telephone terminal 2 does not yet use the guidance apparatus 36. Accordingly, no information on the portable telephone terminal 2 is not yet registered in the posterior registration table 32. Further, it is assumed that the user of the portable telephone terminal 2 has completed user registration. Accordingly, the anterior registration table 38 already stores information for corresponding the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2 to the e-mail address thereof.

[0304]

Interactions among the guidance apparatus 39, the portable telephone terminal 2, the guidance server 3, and the information providing site 20 are those shown in Figure 2 similarly to Embodiment 1. That is, in the following description, the guidance apparatus 1 shown in Figure 2 is to be read as the guidance apparatus 39.

[0305]

Similarly to Embodiment 1, it is assumed that a user goes out with carrying the portable telephone terminal 2.

[0306]

It is assumed that the user goes out with carrying the portable telephone terminal 2. Further, it is assumed that in the outside, the user desires to find a shop holding a bargain sale and thereby purchase teenagers' wear at a low price.

[0307]

In such a case, at first, the user makes a telephone call from the portable telephone terminal 2 to the guidance apparatus 39 as indicated by a telephone call 70 in Figure 2.

[0308]

In a manner similar to Embodiment 5, the telephone number acquiring means 8 acquires the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2, by number notifying service.

[0309]

Then, the telephone number acquiring means 8 notifies the acquired telephone number to the virtual e-mail address generating means 33, the e-mail address acquiring means 37, and the e-mail transmitting means 11.

[0310]

The e-mail address acquiring means 37 searches the anterior registration table 38 and the posterior registration table 32 on the basis of the notified telephone

number, and thereby acquires an e-mail address corresponding to the notified telephone number. At present, the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2 is not yet registered in the posterior registration table 32, but is already registered in the anterior registration table 38. Accordingly, the e-mail address acquiring means 37 acquires the e-mail address of the portable telephone terminal 2 from the anterior registration table 38. Then, the e-mail address acquiring means 37 notifies that the e-mail address has been acquired, to the virtual e-mail address, and at the same time, notifies the acquired e-mail address to the virtual e-mail address generating means 41.

[0311]

When receiving the notification that the e-mail address acquiring means 40 has acquired the e-mail address, the virtual e-mail address generating means 41 does not generate any virtual e-mail address, but notifies the notified e-mail address to the e-mail transmitting means 11.

[0312]

In contrast, only when receiving the notification that the e-mail address acquiring means 40 has failed to acquire an e-mail address, the virtual e-mail address generating means 41 generates virtual e-mail addresses from the notified telephone number according to the virtual e-mail

address generating rules 34, in a manner similar to Embodiment 5. Then, the virtual e-mail address generating means 41 notifies the generated virtual e-mail addresses to the e-mail transmitting means 11.

[0313]

The operation subsequent to this is the same as that of Embodiment 6.

[0314]

In the present embodiment, when the e-mail address can be obtained from the anterior registration table 38 and the posterior registration table 32, an e-mail is transmitted to that e-mail address by priority. In contrast, only when the e-mail address cannot be obtained from the anterior registration table 38 and the posterior registration table 32, e-mails are transmitted to virtual e-mail addresses. This approach reduces the number of e-mails transmitted to invalid e-mail addresses, and at the same time, permits even a portable telephone terminal 2 before user registration to use the guidance apparatus 39 immediately.

[0315]

(Embodiment 8)

Embodiment 8 is described below.

[0316]

Figure 20 shows the configuration of an information

distribution system according to the present embodiment.

[0317]

A guidance apparatus 42 according to the present embodiment further comprises selecting means 43 in addition to the guidance apparatus 39 according to Embodiment 6.

[0318]

The selecting means 43 is means of selecting a virtual e-mail address to which an e-mail is to be transmitted among the generated virtual e-mail addresses, on the basis of the e-mail address notified from the e-mail address acquiring means 37.

[0319]

The other configuration is the same as that of Embodiment 6.

[0320]

Here, the e-mail address acquiring means 37, the posterior registration table 32, the anterior registration table 38, the virtual e-mail address generating means 33, and the virtual e-mail address generating rules 34 according to the present embodiment constitute an example of e-mail address generating means according to the invention. Further, the virtual e-mail address generating means 33, the virtual e-mail address generating rules 34, the e-mail address acquiring means 37, the selecting means 43, the posterior registration table 32, and the anterior

registration table 38 according to the present embodiment constitute an example of e-mail address generating means according to the invention.

[0321]

The operation of the present embodiment in such a configuration is described below with focusing the attention on the difference from Embodiment 6.

[0322]

In a manner similar to Embodiment 6, the telephone number acquiring means 8 acquires the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2, and then notifies the telephone number to the virtual e-mail address generating means 33, the e-mail address acquiring means 37, and the transmission result determining means 35.

[0323]

In a manner similar to Embodiment 6, the virtual e-mail address generating means 33 generates virtual e-mail addresses, while the e-mail address acquiring means 37 acquires the e-mail address. Then, the virtual e-mail address generating means 33 notifies the generated virtual e-mail addresses to the selecting means 43, while the e-mail address acquiring means 37 notifies the acquired e-mail address to the selecting means 43.

[0324]

The selecting means 43 selects a virtual e-mail address

to which an e-mail is to be actually transmitted among the notified virtual e-mail addresses, on the basis of the e-mail address notified from the e-mail address acquiring means 37.

[0325]

The selecting means 43 then transmits the selected virtual e-mail address to the e-mail transmitting means 11.

[0326]

The other operation is the same as that of Embodiment 6, and hence the description is omitted.

[0327]

In the present embodiment, the description has been made for the case that the selecting means 43 transmits a virtual e-mail address to which an e-mail is to be actually transmitted among the generated virtual e-mail addresses, on the basis of the e-mail address notified from the e-mail address acquiring means 37. However, the invention is not restricted to this. As illustrated by a guidance apparatus 44 shown in Figure 21, deleting means 45 may be used. Here, the deleting means 45 deletes virtual e-mail addresses to which an e-mail is not to be transmitted among the generated virtual e-mail addresses, on the basis of the e-mail address notified from the e-mail address acquiring means 37, and then notifies the remained virtual e-mail address to the

e-mail transmitting means 11.

[0328]

(Embodiment 9)

Embodiment 9 is described below.

[0329]

Figure 22 shows the configuration of a guidance information distribution system according to the present embodiment.

[0330]

The present embodiment describes the case in which a guidance information distribution system according to Embodiments 1-8 is used at a serious natural disaster such as an earthquake.

[0331]

The guidance information distribution system according to the present embodiment comprises a portable telephone terminal 2, wireless communications base stations 48a, 48b, 48c, a relay station 4, a provider 6, and a guidance apparatus 46.

[0332]

The guidance apparatus 46 is any one of the guidance apparatuses according to Embodiments 1-8.

[0333]

The portable telephone terminal 2, the relay station 4, and the provider 6 are identical to those in Embodiments

1-8.

[0334]

The earthquake-stricken area 37 is an area where a large earthquake has occurred, and is assumed to be the Osaka area, for example. The wireless communications base stations 48a-48c are constructed in the earthquake-stricken area 47. Each wireless communications base station 48a-48c is connected to the relay station 4 via the telephone line 4.

[0335]

The guidance apparatus 46 is assumed to be constructed in Tokyo completely free from the influence of the earthquake.

[0336]

The operation of the present embodiment in such a configuration is described below.

[0337]

When an earthquake occurs in the earthquake-stricken area 47, a large number of telephone calls for inquiring after persons' safety and the like are made to the area. Accordingly, the telephone line 14 becomes congested and busy in the earthquake-stricken area 47. This makes telephone calls difficult to connect. However, telephone calls are easier to connect in the areas other than the earthquake-stricken area 47, such as in Tokyo.

[0338]

In such a case, the portable telephone terminal 2 makes a telephone call to the guidance apparatus 46 constructed in Tokyo.

[0339]

The guidance apparatus 46 acquires the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 46, and then transmits guidance information containing the information for securing the safety of the user of the portable telephone terminal 2, by e-mail.

[0340]

Such guidance information includes: information notifying the locations of a safe refuge site 49; and information notifying the locations of a site where water service 50 is available at a certain time after the earthquake occurrence, in case that the ordinary city water is out of service.

[0341]

The user of the portable telephone terminal 2 reads the guidance information transmitted from the guidance apparatus 46 by e-mail, and thereby goes to the safe refuge site 49, and/or goes to the site of water service 50 so as to obtain drinking water.

[0342]

As such, the guidance apparatus 46 transmits the

information on the refuge site 49 and the like, continuously at each time of change in the situation of the earthquake-stricken area, beginning at the time when the telephone call from the portable telephone terminal 2 is received.

[0343]

An e-mail, which transfers information in character messages, needs much smaller amount of data in comparison with the case that the same amount of information is transferred as voice messages. Thus, when the guidance information distribution system according to the present embodiment is used in the earthquake-stricken area 47, the congestion in the telephone line 14 is reduced, whereby the information on the refuge site 49 and the water service 50 for securing the sufferers' safety is transferred to the sufferers rapidly.

[0344]

The guidance apparatus 46 may have the function of detecting the wireless communications base station through which the portable telephone terminal 2 makes the telephone call, among the wireless communications base stations 48a-48c. Such a function permits the identification of the approximate location of the portable telephone terminal 2. In this case, the guidance apparatus 46 can provide guidance information on the refuge site 49 and the water

service site 50 nearest to the location of the portable telephone terminal 2. As such, the guidance information may be changed depending on the location of the portable telephone terminal 2.

[0345]

(Embodiment 10)

Embodiment 10 is described below.

Figure 23 shows the configuration of a guidance information distribution system according to the present embodiment.

[0346]

The present embodiment describes the case in which a user goes overseas with carrying the portable telephone terminal 2.

[0347]

The guidance information distribution system according to the present embodiment comprises a portable telephone terminal 2, a wireless communications base station 48, a relay station 4, a provider 6, and a guidance apparatus 51.

[0348]

The guidance apparatus 51 is any one of the guidance apparatuses according to Embodiments 1-8.

[0349]

The portable telephone terminal 2, the relay station

4, and the provider 6 are identical to those in Embodiments 1-8.

[0350]

The portable telephone terminal 2 is located in an overseas place 52.

[0351]

The operation of the present embodiment in such a configuration is described below.

[0352]

It is assumed that the user of the portable telephone terminal 2 cannot speak the local language in the overseas place 52. Further, it is assumed that the user has got a stomachache.

[0353]

In such a case, because the user cannot speak the local language in the overseas place 52, the user makes at first a telephone call to the guidance apparatus 51 constructed in Japan, the user's home country.

[0354]

Then, in a manner similar to that of Embodiments 1-8, the guidance apparatus 51 transmits guidance information notifying the location of a hospital, in Japanese by e-mail.

[0355]

When the portable telephone terminal 2 receives the guidance information, the user is informed of the location

of the hospital 53, and thereby goes to the hospital 53 for examination.

[0356]

In the above-mentioned embodiments, the description has been made for the case that the portable telephone terminal 2 selects guidance information by selecting one of telephone numbers to which a telephone call is to be made. However, the invention is not restricted to this. As shown in Figure 24(a), the telephone number to which a telephone call is to be made may be the only telephone number 06-1234-1231, and one of selection numbers may be specified. That is, when number 1 is selected when the portable telephone terminal 2 makes a telephone call to 06-1234-1231, the information on the Umeda area in Osaka is selected. When number 2 is selected, the information on the Namba area in Osaka is selected. As shown in Figure 24(b), in order to select the bargain sale information among the information items on the Umeda area in Osaka, number 1 is selected when a telephone call is made to 06-1234-5671. As such, instead of selecting one of a plurality of telephone numbers to which a telephone call is to be made from the portable telephone terminal 2, one of selection numbers may be selected in order to select guidance information.

[0357]

In the above-mentioned embodiments, the description

has been made for the case that the guidance information is in a hierarchically form, and that the guidance apparatus 1 provides guidance information in two-layer hierarchy to the portable telephone terminal 2. However, the invention is not restricted to this. The guidance apparatus 1 may provide guidance information in the hierarchy of any number of layers, such as single-layer hierarchy, three-layer hierarchy, and four-layer hierarchy, to the portable telephone terminal 2.

[0358]

In the above-mentioned embodiments, the description has been made for the case that the guidance information in the hierarchy lower than that of the guidance information provided by the guidance apparatus 1 is provided in two-layer hierarchy by the guidance server 3. However, the invention is not restricted to this. The guidance server 3 may provide guidance information in the hierarchy of any number of layers, such as single-layer hierarchy, three-layer hierarchy, and four-layer hierarchy, to the portable telephone terminal 2.

[0359]

Further, first information and/or second information according to the invention may be, or alternatively, may be not, in a hierarchical form similar to that of the guidance information according to the above-mentioned embodiments, .

[0360]

In the above-mentioned embodiments, the description has been made for the case that the local area on which the information is to be obtained is selected at first. However, the invention is not restricted to this. The field of interest on which the information is to be obtained may be selected at first, and then the local area on which the information is to be obtained may be selected.

[0361]

In the above-mentioned embodiments, the description has been made for the case that the telephone replying means 17 terminates the telephone call from the portable telephone terminal 2 immediately after the completion of the acquisition of the telephone number of the portable telephone terminal 2. However, the invention is not restricted to this. The telephone call from the portable telephone terminal 2 may be terminated after being replied to.

[0362]

The info-communication terminal according to the invention is not restricted to the portable telephone terminal 2 according to the above-mentioned embodiments. That is, the info-communication terminal according to the invention may be a terminal of any type capable of being connected to the Internet and making a telephone call. Such

terminals include: a PHS terminal capable of being connected to the Internet; an automobile telephone set capable of being connected to the Internet; and an e-mail-dedicated mobile terminal capable of being connected to the Internet via the portable telephone terminal line.

[0363]

In the above-mentioned Embodiments 1-4, the description has been made for the case that the user of the guidance apparatus is registered to the user information database 10 in advance. However, the invention is not restricted to this. As described in detail in Embodiment 5 and the subsequent embodiments, the e-mail address of the portable telephone terminal 2 may be generated according to a rule such as the virtual e-mail address generating rule.

[0364]

The information distributing means, the e-mail address generating means, and the receiving means according to the invention need not to constitute a single apparatus. The information distributing means and the e-mail address generating means may be located in the same place, while the receiving means may be located in another place departing therefrom. Further, the information distributing means and the receiving means may be located in the same place, while the e-mail address generating means may be located

in another place departing therefrom. The receiving means and the e-mail address generating means may be located in the same place, while the information distributing means may be located in another place departing therefrom.

[0365]

The scope of the invention includes a computer-processable medium which carries a program and/or data for causing a computer to execute all or part of the function of all or part of means or the info-communication terminal in the system according to the invention.

[0366]

The scope of the invention includes an information set which is a program and/or data for causing a computer to execute all or part of the function of all or part of means or the info-communication terminal in the system according to the invention.

[0367]

The invention is a medium which carries a program and/or data for causing a computer to execute all or part of the function of all or part of means or the info-communication terminal in the above-mentioned system according to the invention, wherein: the medium is read out by a computer; and the read-out program and/or data carry out the above-mentioned function in cooperation with the computer.

[0368]

The invention is further an information set which is a program and/or data for causing a computer to execute all or part of the function of all or part of means or the info-communication terminal in the above-mentioned system according to the invention, wherein: the information set is read out by a computer; and the read-out program and/or data carry out the above-mentioned function in cooperation with the computer.

[0369]

The data according to the invention includes a data structure, a data format, a data type.

[0370]

The medium according to the invention includes: a recording medium such as a ROM; a transmitting medium such as the Internet; and a transmitting medium such as light, radio waves, acoustic waves, and the like.

[0371]

Further, the medium which carries a program and/or data according to the invention includes: a recording medium on which a program and/or data is recorded; and a transmitting medium for transmitting a program and/or data.

[0372]

The computer processability according to the invention includes: that a recording medium such as a ROM

is readable by a computer; and that a program and/or data transmitted by a transmitting medium can be processed by a computer after the transmission.

[0373]

The information set according to the invention includes software such as a program and/or data.

[0374]

Further, as described above, the configuration of the invention may be implemented by software or hardware.

[0375]

[Effect of the Invention]

As seen from the above-mentioned description, the present invention permits: a system for providing desired information easily; a medium; and an information set.

[0376]

The invention permits: a system having good usability for users and information distributors; a medium; and an information set.

The invention permits: a system capable of distributing area information; a medium; and an information set.

[0377]

The invention permits: a system capable of transmitting information for the safety of sufferers accurately and rapidly to the sufferers in case of a serious

natural disaster; a medium; and an information set.

[Brief Description of Drawings]

[Figure 1]

Figure 1 shows the configuration of an information distribution system according to Embodiment 1 of the invention.

[Figure 2]

Figure 2 shows interactions among a guidance apparatus, a portable telephone terminal, a guidance server, and an information providing site according to Embodiment 1 of the invention.

[Figure 3]

Figure 3 shows an example of telephone numbers and distributed guidance information according to Embodiments 1 and 3 of the invention.

[Figure 4]

Figure 4 shows an example of guidance information sent by e-mail from a guidance apparatus according to Embodiments 1, 3 and 4 of the invention.

[Figure 5]

Figure 5 shows an example of guidance information sent by e-mail from a guidance apparatus according to Embodiments 1 and 4 of the invention.

[Figure 6]

Figure 6 shows an example of guidance information provided in a Web page by a guidance server according to Embodiments 1 and 4 of the invention.

[Figure 7]

Figure 7 shows an example of guidance information provided in a Web page by a guidance server according to Embodiment 1 of the invention.

[Figure 8]

Figure 8 shows the configuration of an information distribution system according to Embodiment 2 of the invention.

[Figure 9]

Figure 9 shows interactions among a guidance apparatus, a portable telephone terminal, a guidance server, and an information providing site according to Embodiment 2 of the invention.

[Figure 10]

Figure 10(a) shows an example of telephone numbers each used for selecting a local area according to Embodiment 2 of the invention.

Figure 10(b) shows an example of voice guidance according to Embodiment 2 of the invention.

[Figure 11]

Figure 11 shows the configuration of an information distribution system according to Embodiment 3 of the

invention.

[Figure 12]

Figure 12 shows interactions between a guidance apparatus and a portable telephone terminal according to Embodiment 3 of the invention.

[Figure 13]

Figure 13 shows an example of guidance information sent by e-mail from a guidance apparatus according to Embodiment 3 of the invention.

[Figure 14]

Figure 14 shows an example of guidance information sent by e-mail from a guidance apparatus according to Embodiment 3 of the invention.

[Figure 15]

Figure 15 shows interactions among a guidance server, a portable telephone terminal, and a guidance apparatus according to Embodiment 4 of the invention.

[Figure 16]

Figure 16 shows an example of guidance information sent by e-mail from a guidance server according to Embodiment 4 of the invention.

[Figure 17]

Figure 17 shows the configuration of an information distribution system according to Embodiment 5 of the invention.

[Figure 18]

Figure 18 shows the configuration of an information distribution system according to Embodiment 6 of the invention.

[Figure 19]

Figure 19 shows the configuration of an information distribution system according to Embodiment 7 of the invention.

[Figure 20]

Figure 20 shows the configuration of an information distribution system according to Embodiment 8 of the invention.

[Figure 21]

Figure 21 shows the configuration of an alternative information distribution system according to Embodiment 8 of the invention.

[Figure 22]

Figure 22 shows the configuration of an information distribution system according to Embodiment 9 of the invention.

[Figure 23]

Figure 23 shows the configuration of an information distribution system according to Embodiment 10 of the invention.

[Figure 24]

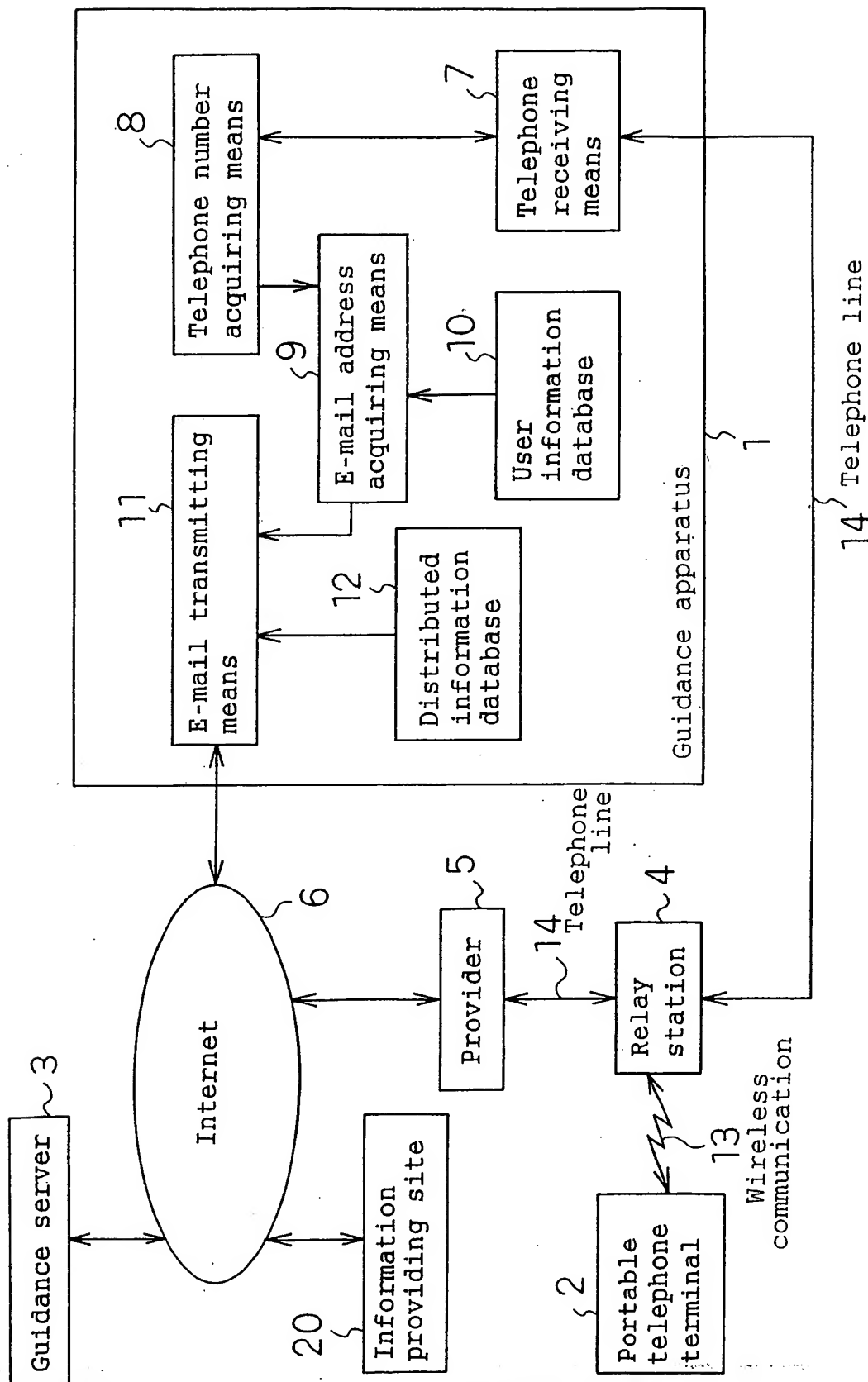
Figure 24 shows an example in which selection numbers are used for selecting guidance information according to Embodiment 1 of the invention.

[Description of the Reference Numerals]

- 1 Guidance apparatus
- 2 Portable telephone terminal
- 3 Information providing apparatus
- 4 Relay station
- 5 Provider
- 6 Internet
- 7 Telephone receiving means
- 8 Telephone number acquiring means
- 9 E-mail address acquiring means
- 10 User information database
- 11 E-mail transmitting means
- 12 Distributed information database
- 13 Wireless communication
- 14 Telephone line
- 16 Voice guidance means
- 17 Telephone replying means
- 18 Guidance information distributing means
- 20 Telephone call
- 30 Guidance apparatus
- 31 E-mail address acquiring means

- 32 Posterior registration table
- 33 Virtual e-mail address generating means
- 34 Virtual e-mail address generation rule
- 35 Transmission result determining means
- 36 Guidance apparatus
- 38 Anterior registration table
- 39 Guidance apparatus
- 40 E-mail address acquiring means
- 41 Virtual e-mail address generating means
- 42 Guidance apparatus
- 43 Selecting means
- 44 Guidance apparatus
- 45 Deleting means

Fig. 1



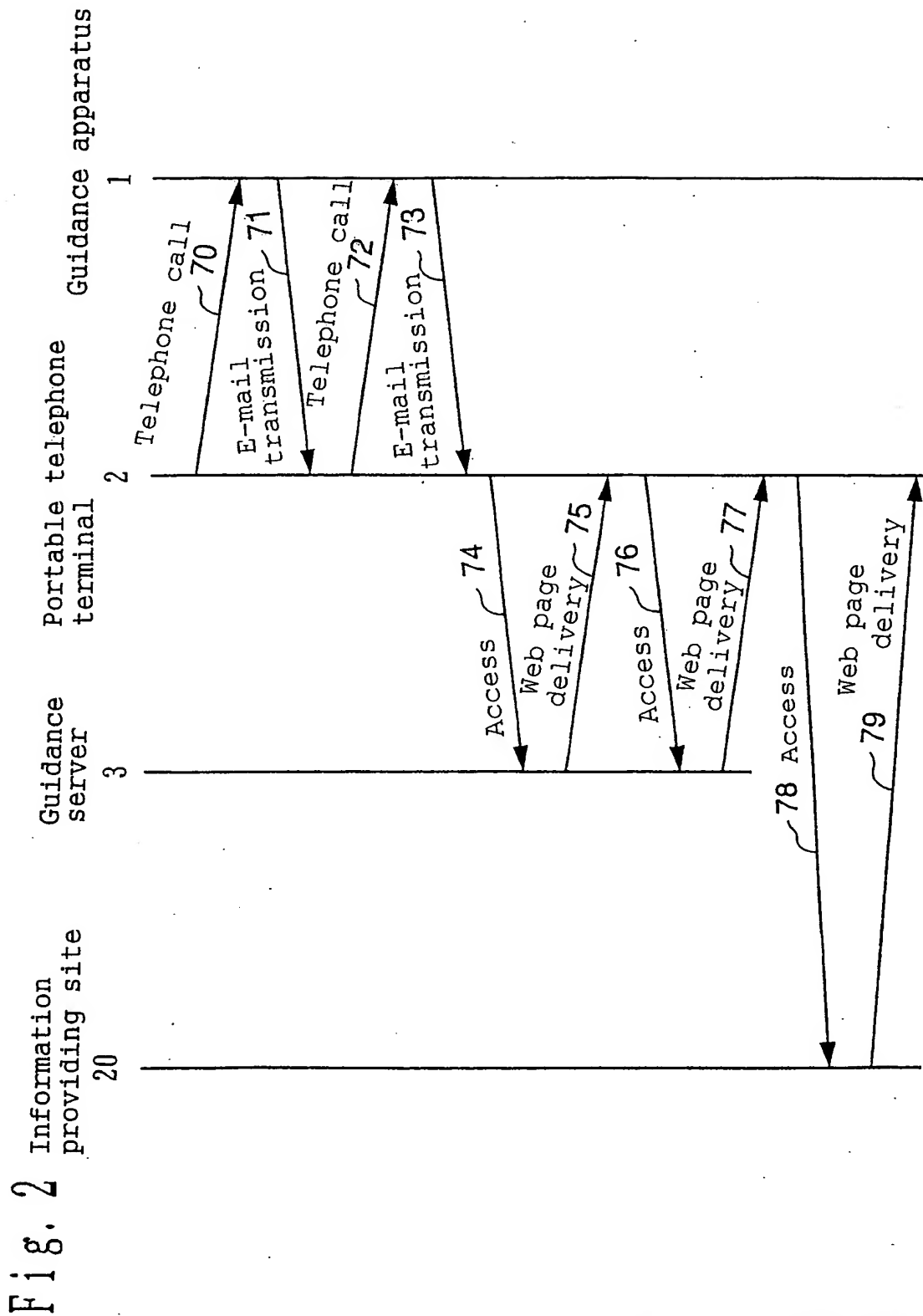


Fig. 3 (a)

Telephone number	Service
06-1234-1231	Information on the Umeda area in Osaka
06-1234-1232	Information on the Namba area in Osaka
06-1234-1233	Information on the Tennoji area in Osaka
06-1234-1234	Information on the Kyobashi area in Osaka
06-1234-1235	Information on the Osaka Bay area
⋮	⋮

Fig. 3 (b)

Telephone number	Service
06-1234-5671	Bargain sale information
06-1234-5672	Gourmet information
06-1234-5673	Sight-seeing information
06-1234-5674	Movies information
⋮	⋮

Fig. 4

Thank you for using our service.	
The following is a guide of the Umeda area in Osaka..	
06-1234-5671	Bargain sale information
06-1234-5672	Gourmet information
06-1234-5673	Sight-seeing information
06-1234-5674	Movies information
⋮	⋮

Fig. 5

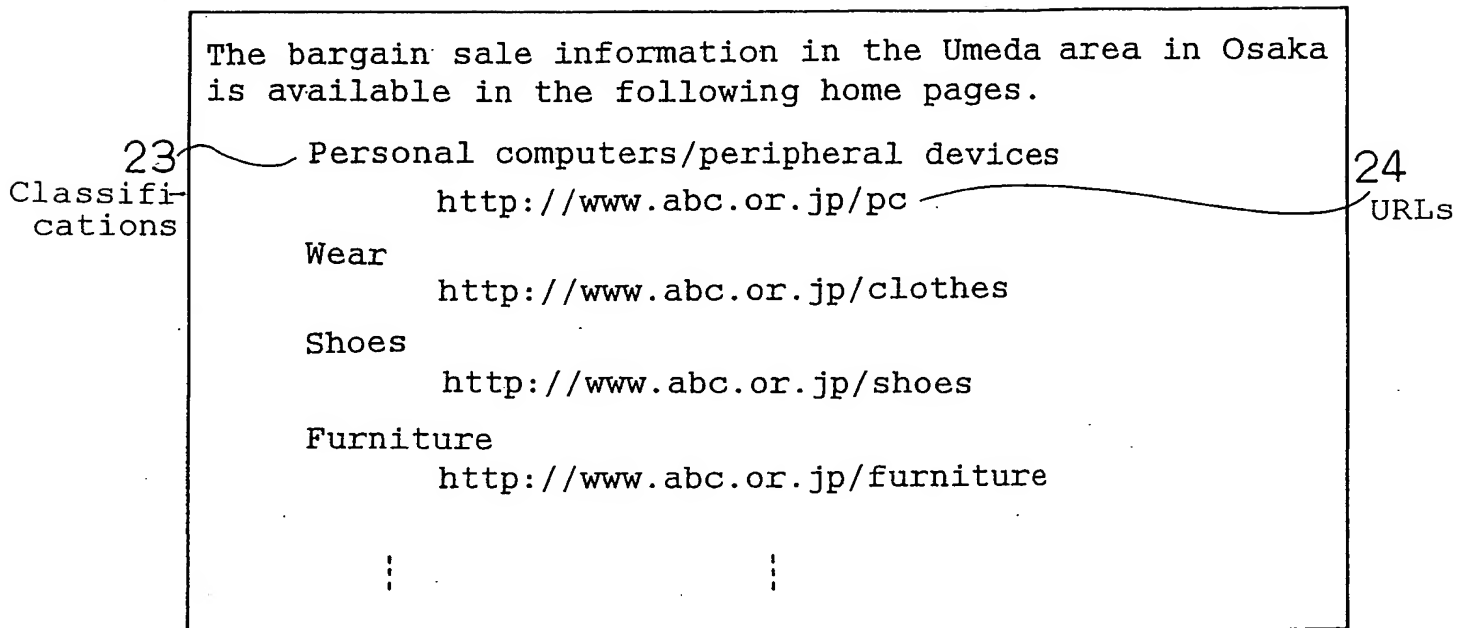


Fig. 6

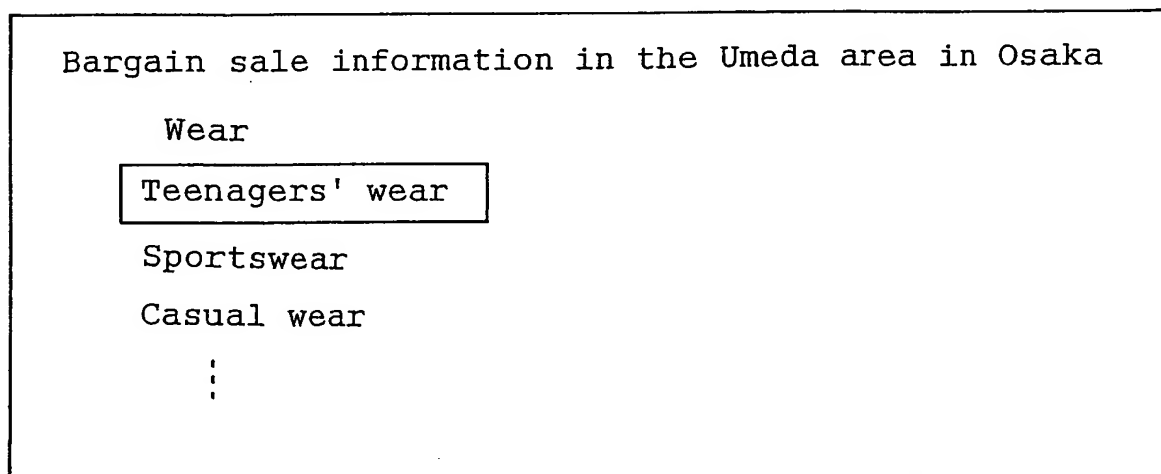


Fig. 7

90 URLs	Guide information on the Umeda area in Osaka Bargain sale information - Home pages for Teenagers' wear	Shop names 91
	http://www.bcd.co.jp Shop ○△ Jeans 1,500 yen. 100 sets only.	92
	http://www.efg.co.jp Departmentstore □× T-shirt designed by ○□ 1,980 yen. 300 sets only.	Descriptions
	http://www.hij.co.jp Boutique ○○ Skirt 2,500 yen. : :	

Fig. 8

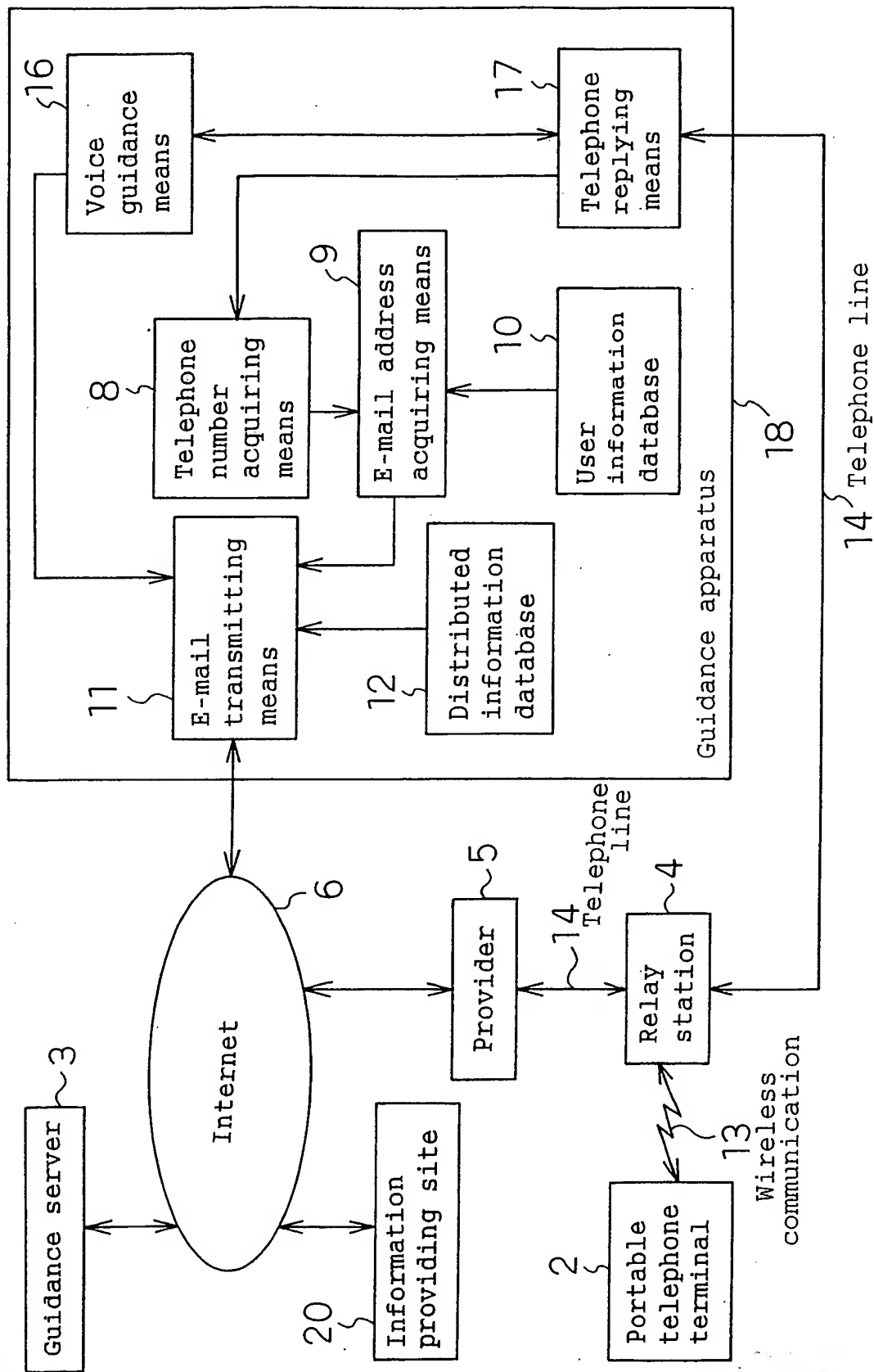


Fig. 9

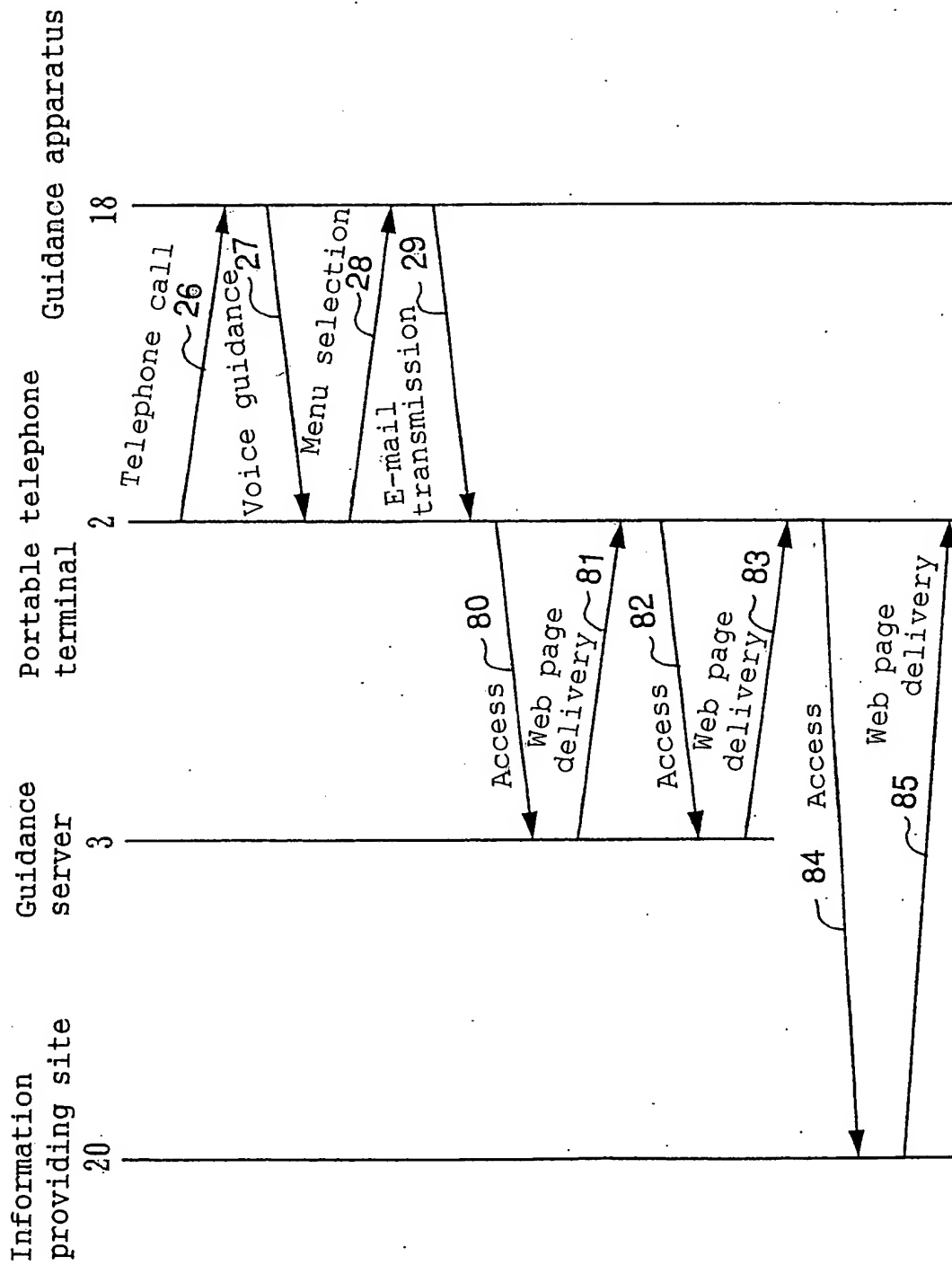


Fig. 10 (a)

Telephone number	Service
06-1234-1231	Information on the Umeda area in Osaka
06-1234-1232	Information on the Namba area in Osaka
06-1234-1233	Information on the Tennoji area in Osaka
06-1234-1234	Information on the Kyobashi area in Osaka
06-1234-1235	Information on the Osaka Bay area
:	:

Fig. 10 (b)

Thank you for using our service.	
The following is a guide of the Umeda area in Osaka.	
Press 1 for Bargain sale information.	
Press 2 for Gourmet information	
Press 3 for Sight-seeing information	
Press 4 for Movies information	
:	:

Fig. 11

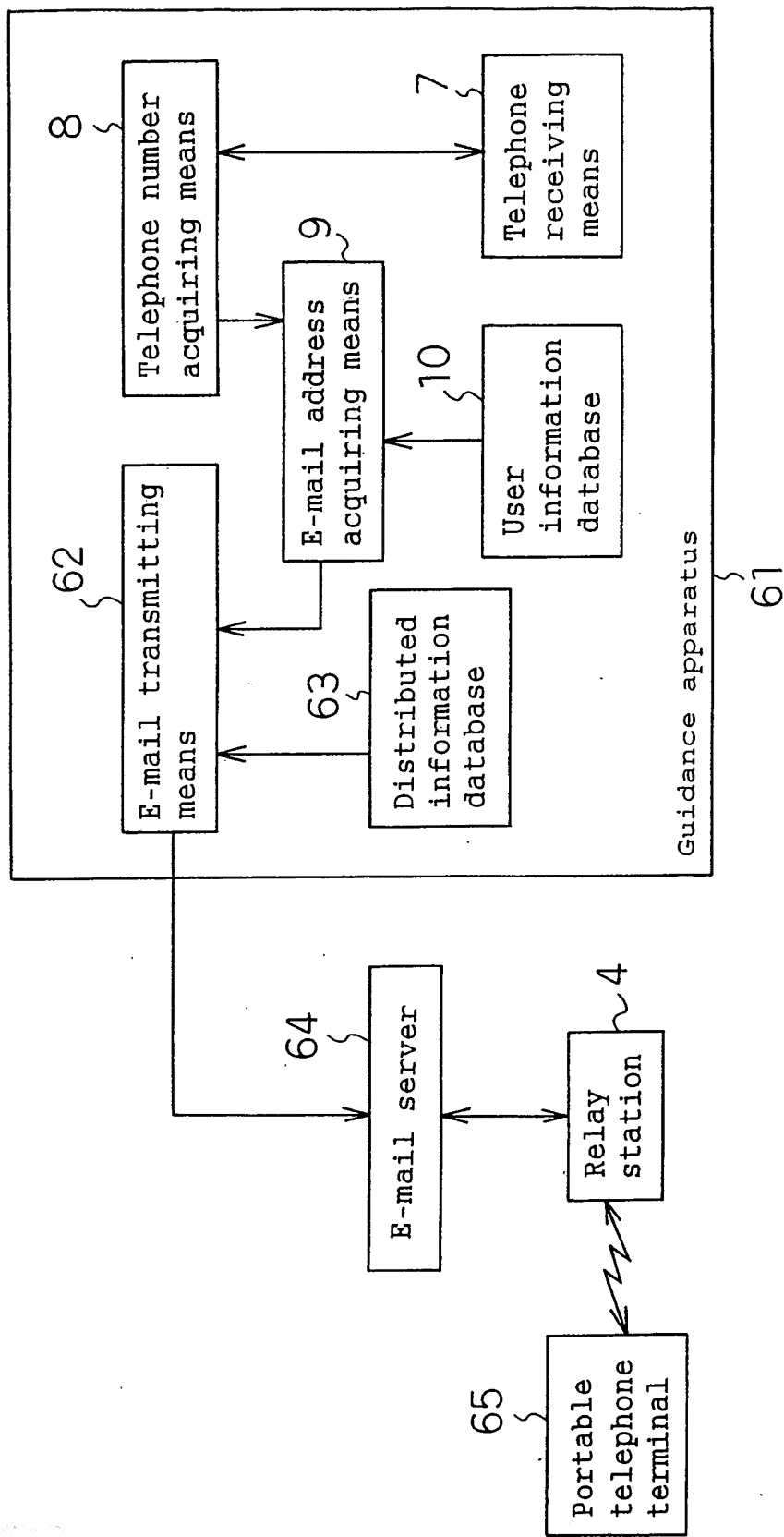


Fig. 12

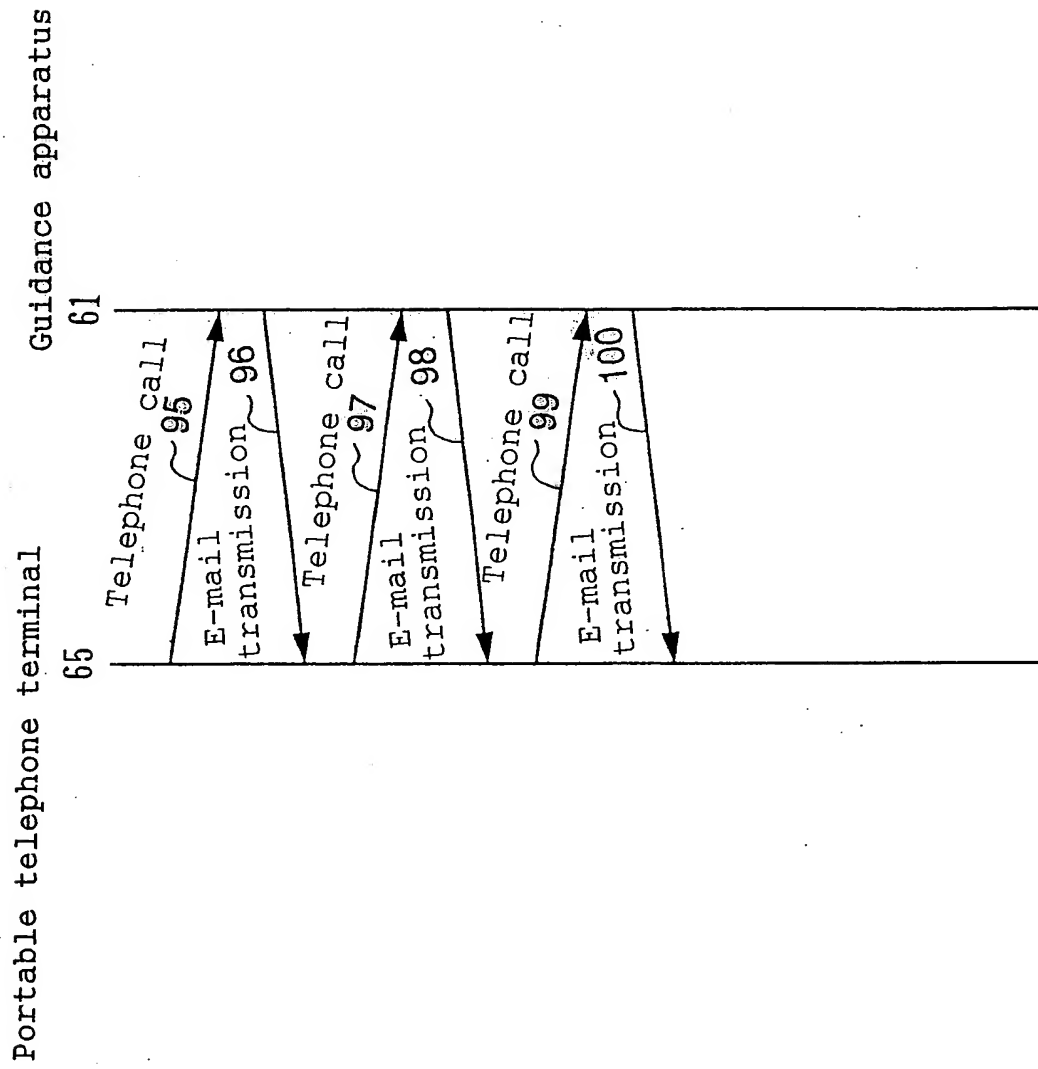


Fig. 13

The following is bargain sale information in the Umeda area in Osaka.

TEL 06-1234-3211 Personal computers/peripheral devices

TEL 06-1234-3212 Wear

TEL 06-1234-3213 Shoes

TEL 06-1234-3214 Furniture

Fig. 14

Bargain sale information in the Umeda area in Osaka

Wear

Teenagers' wear

Shop ○△ Jeans 1,500 yen. 100 sets only.
Various size available.

TEL 06-6543-1234

Shop ○□ T-shirt designed by ○□ 1,980 yen.
Original item. 300 sets only.

TEL 06-6543-1235

⋮

⋮

Sportswear

×× Sports Training wear 5,000 yen.
Various colors available.

TEL 06-6543-1236

⋮

⋮

Fig. 15

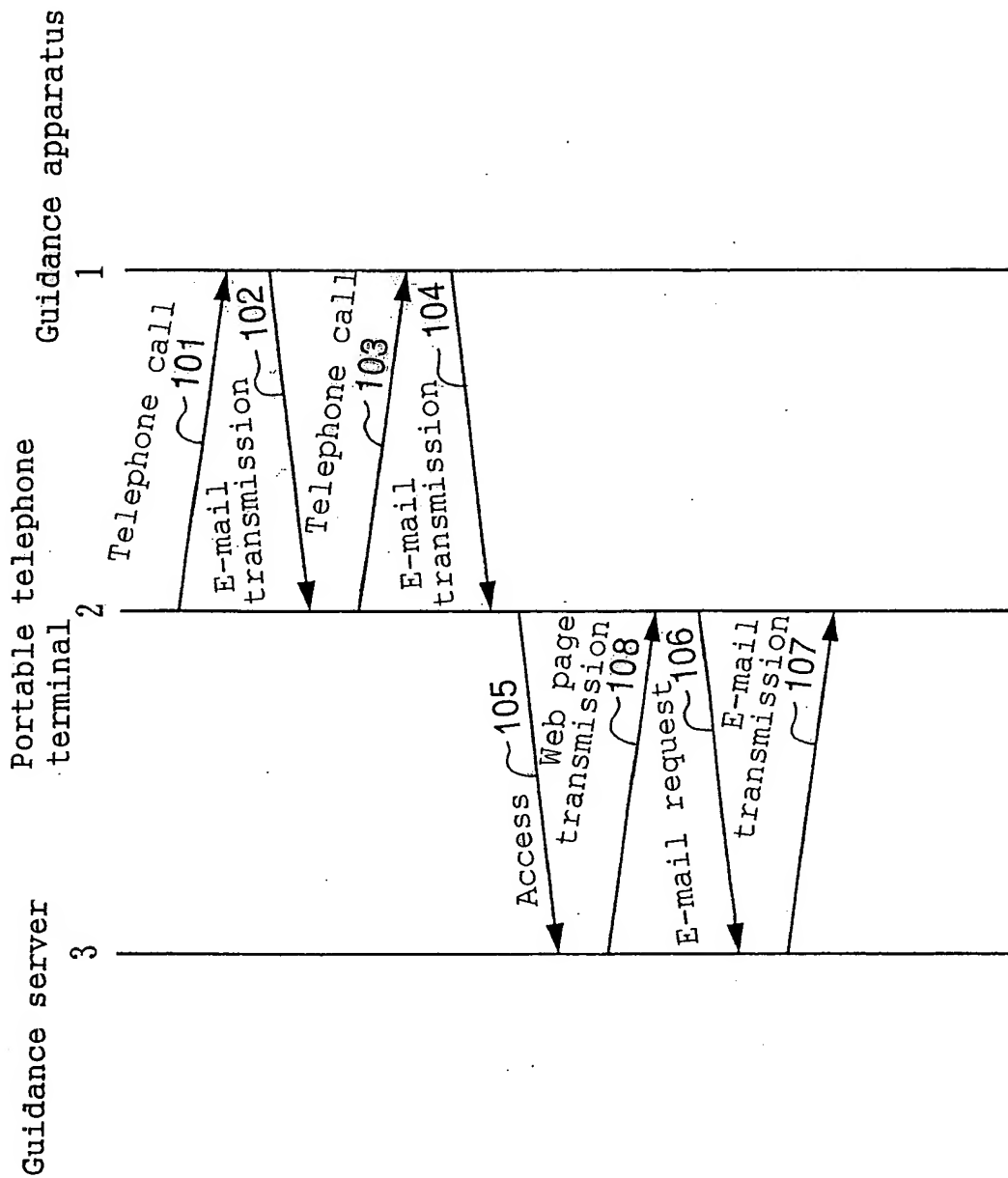


Fig. 16

Bargain sale information in the Umeda area in Osaka

Teenagers' wear

Shop ○△ Jeans 1,500 yen. 100 sets only.
Various size available.
TEL 06-6543-1234

Shop ○□ T-shirt designed by ○□ 1,980 yen.
Original item. 300 sets only.
TEL 06-6543-1235

⋮

⋮

Fig. 17

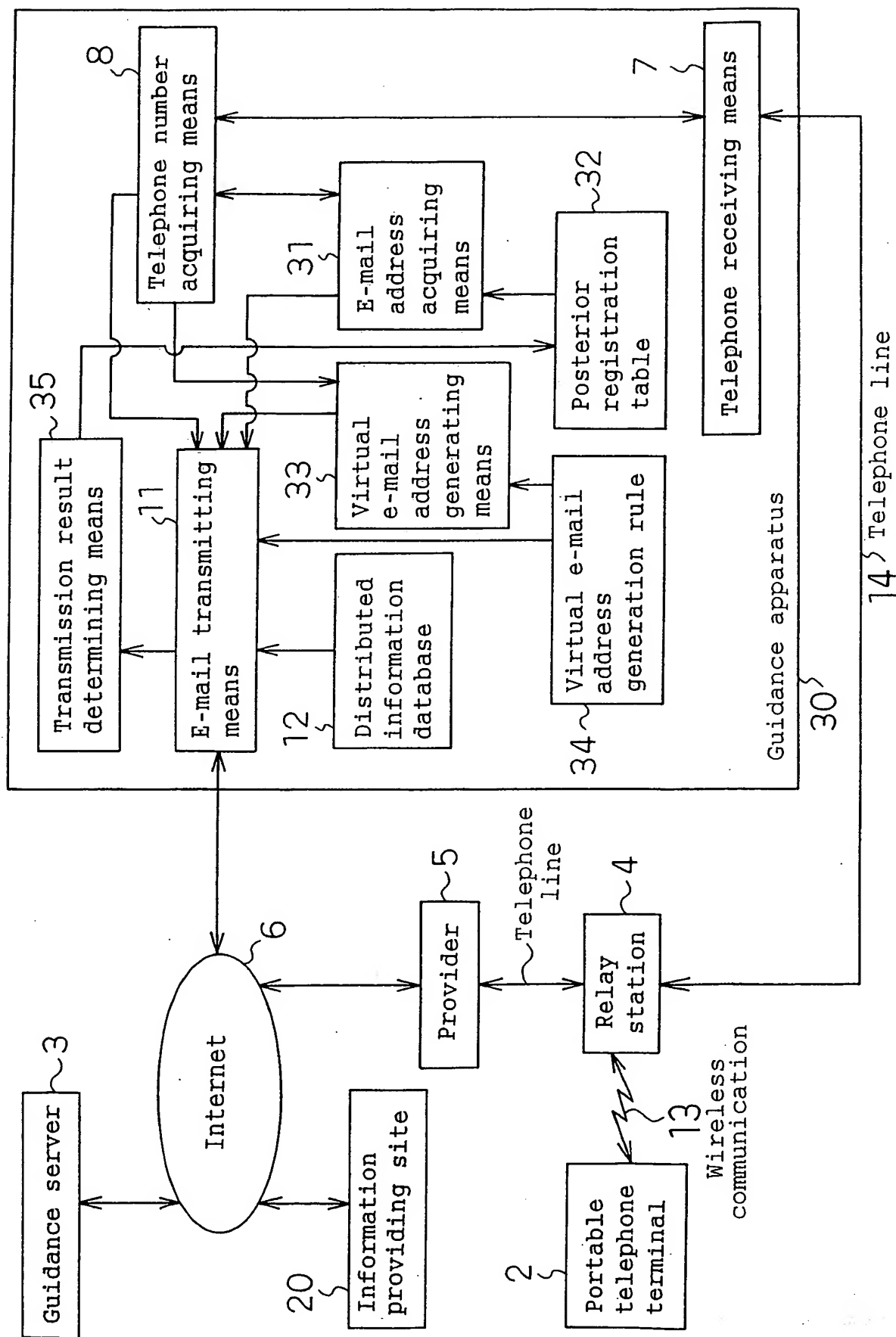


Fig. 18

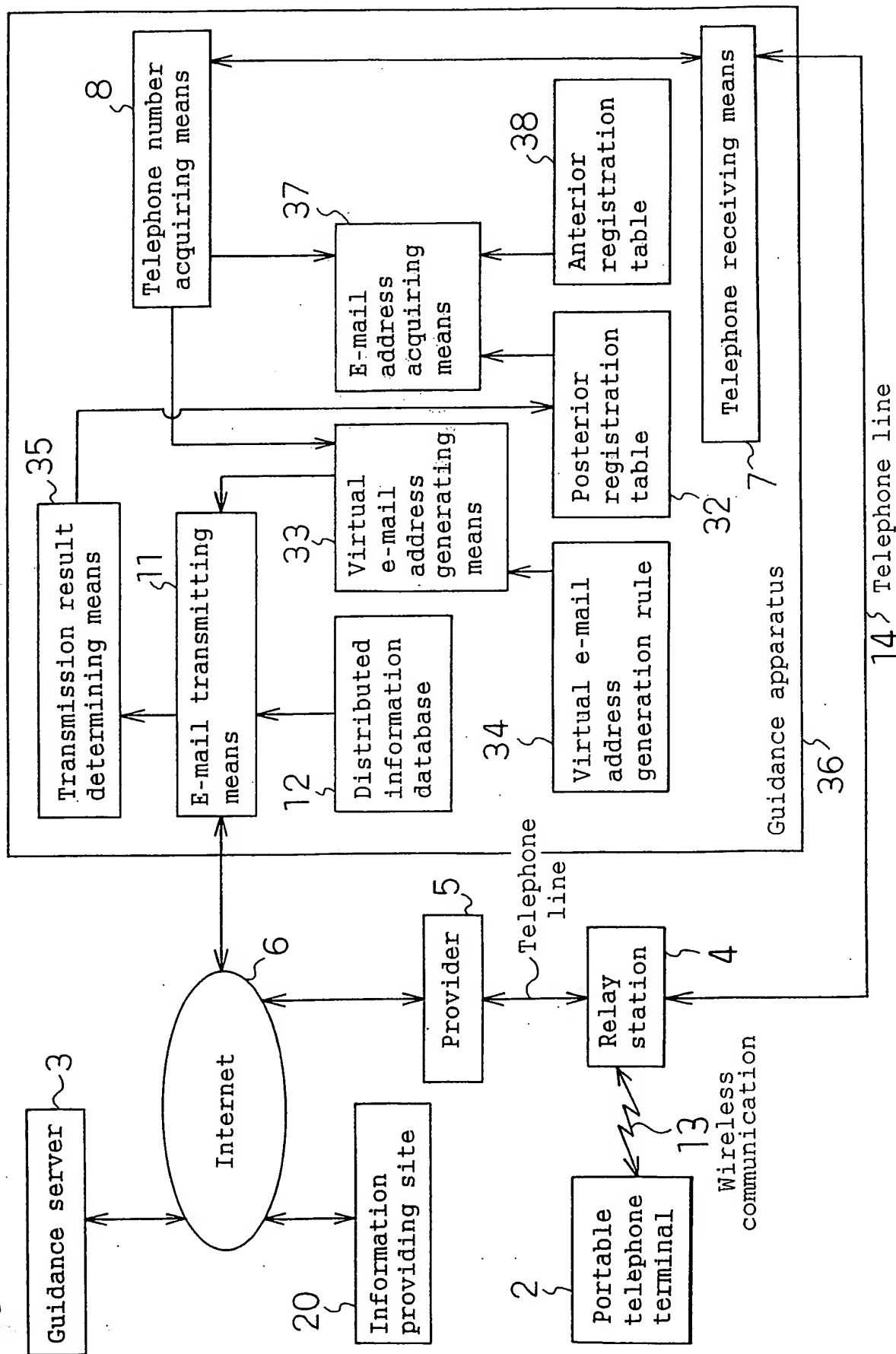


Fig. 19

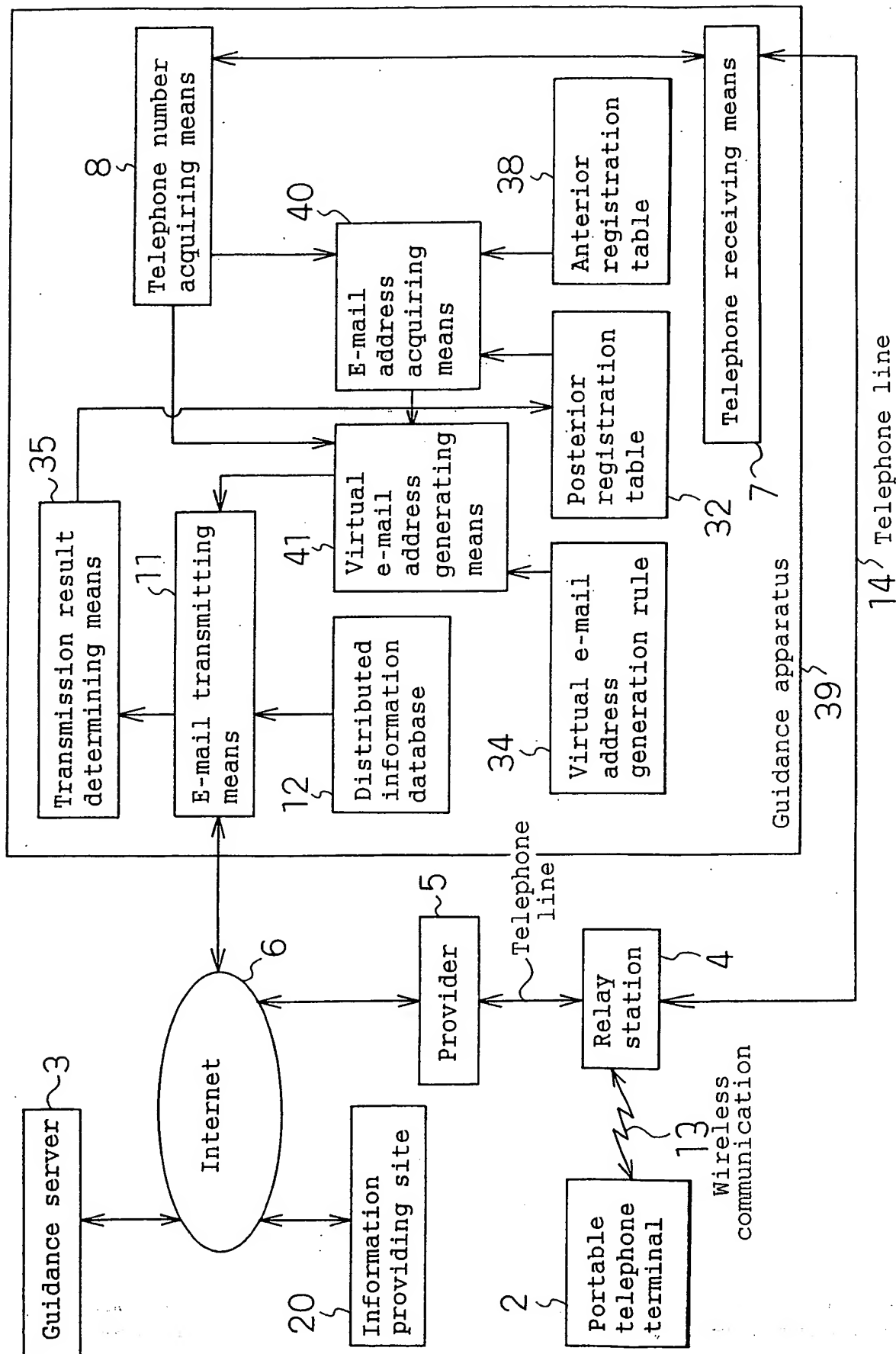


Fig. 20

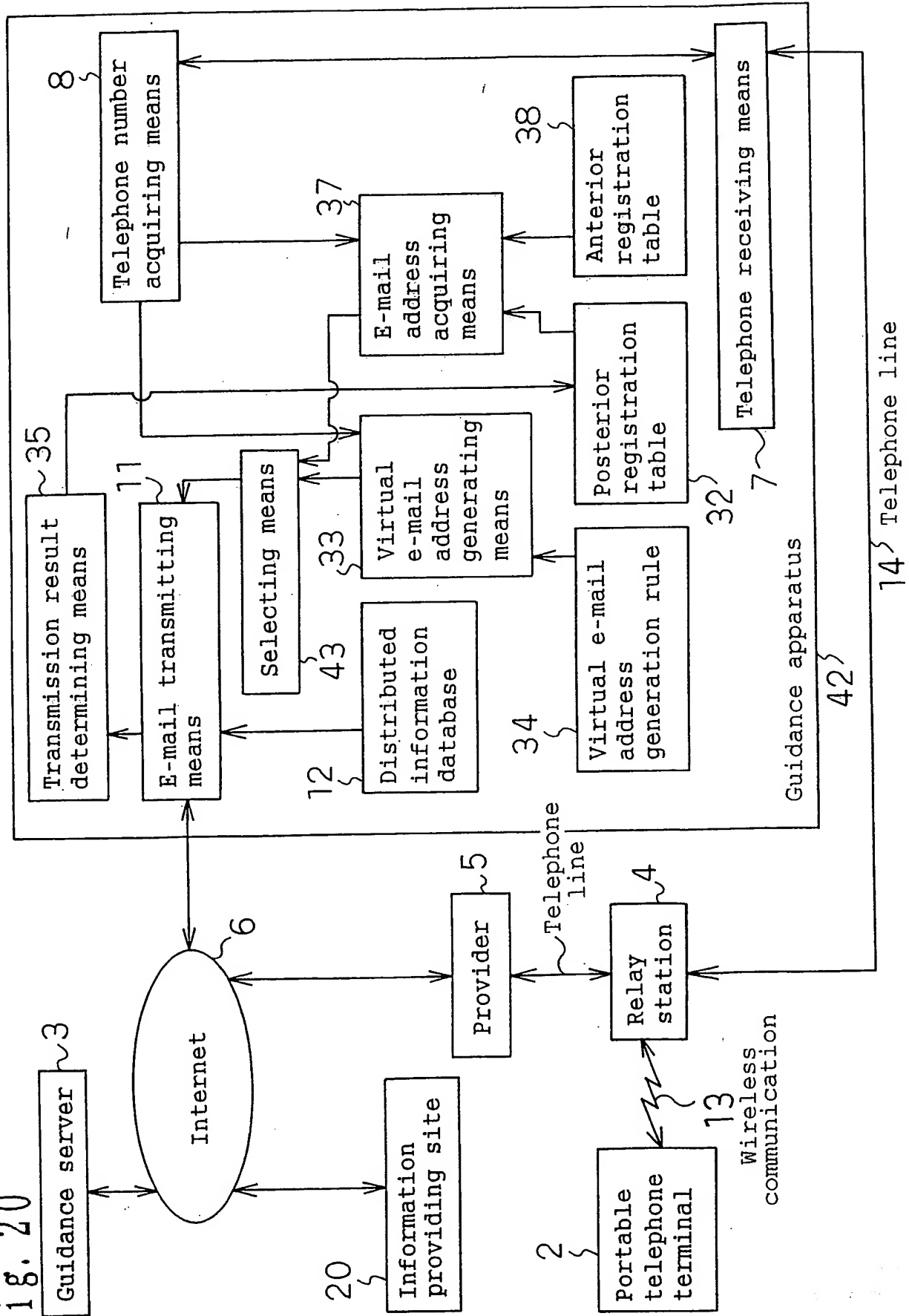


Fig. 21

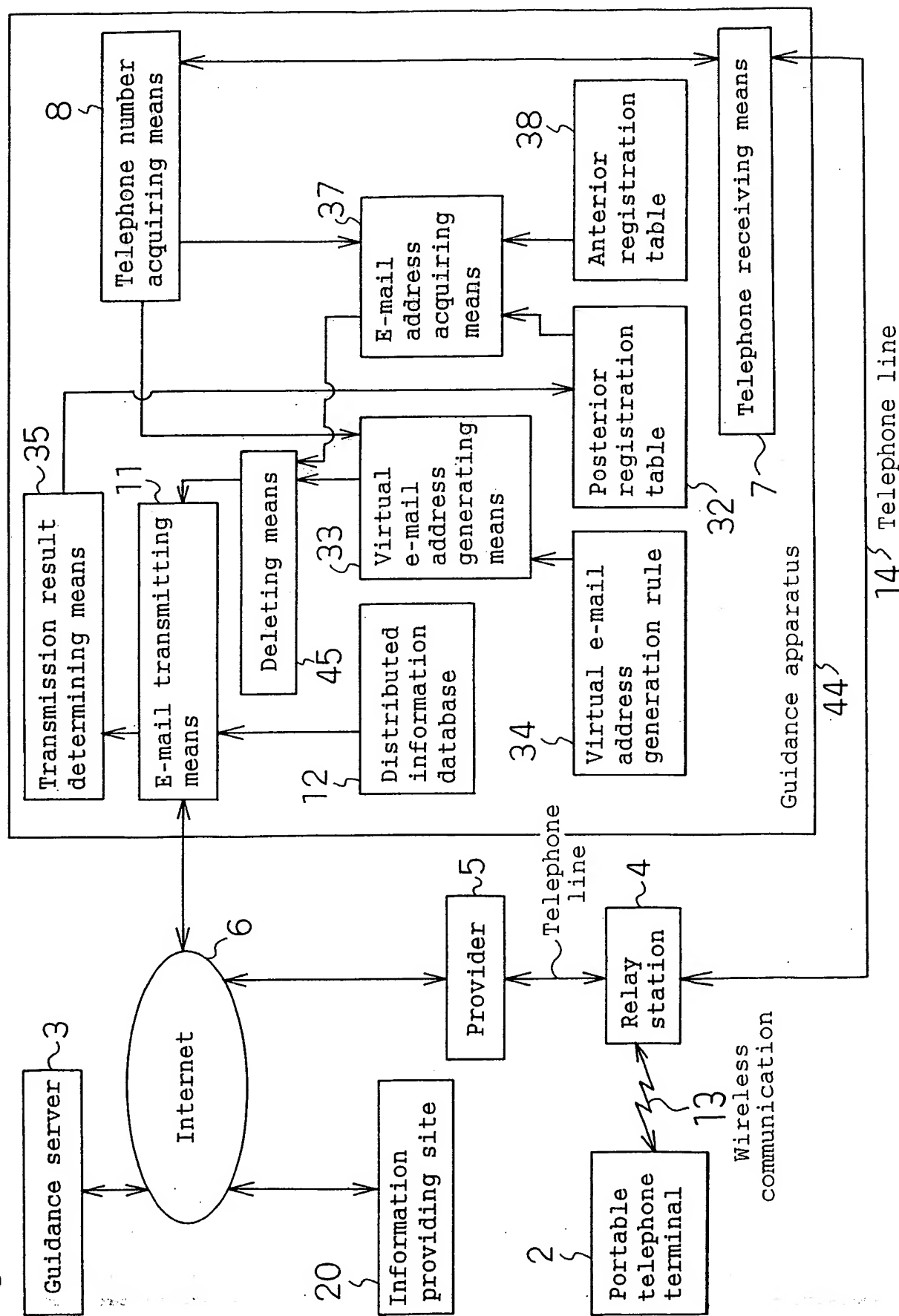


Fig. 22

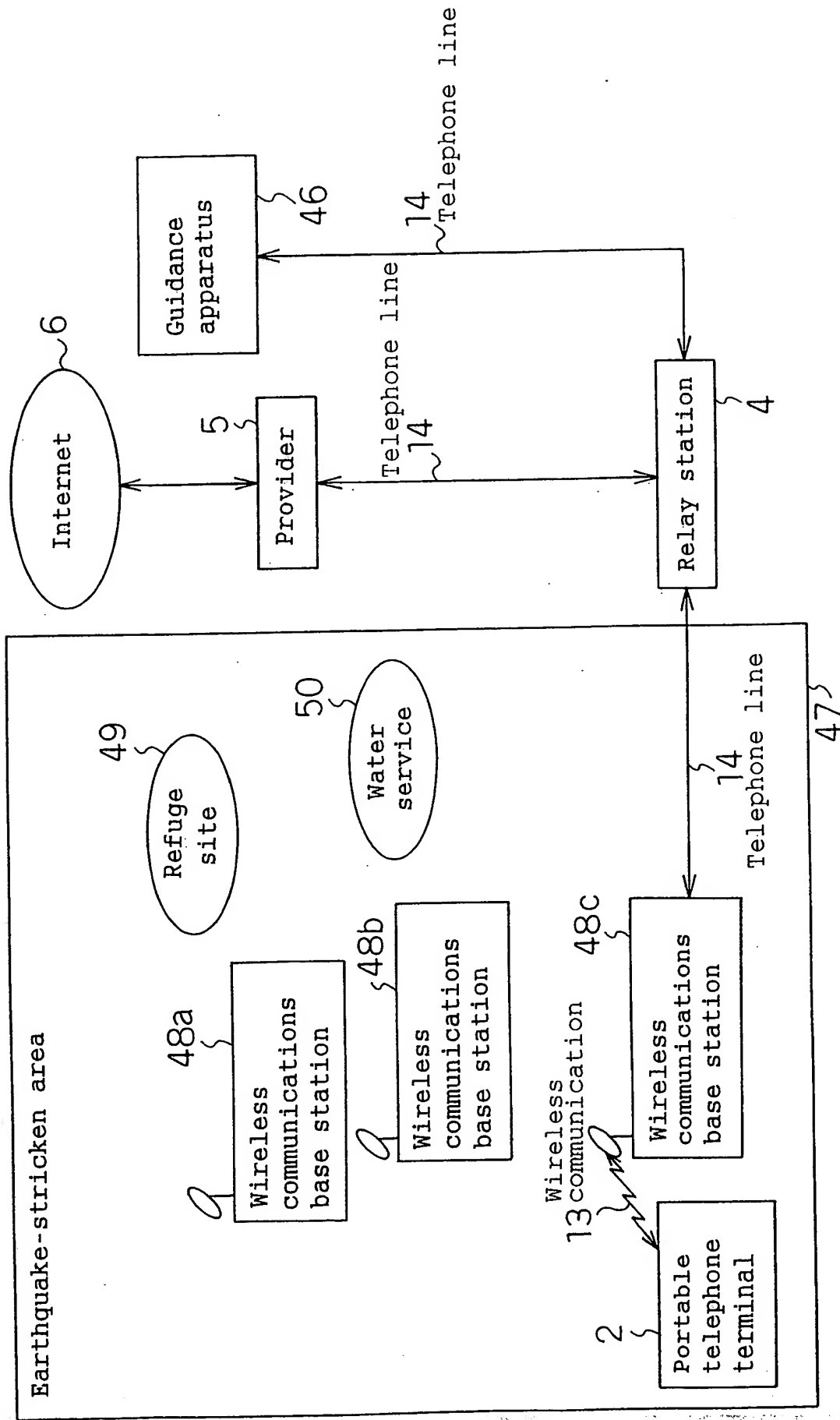


Fig. 23

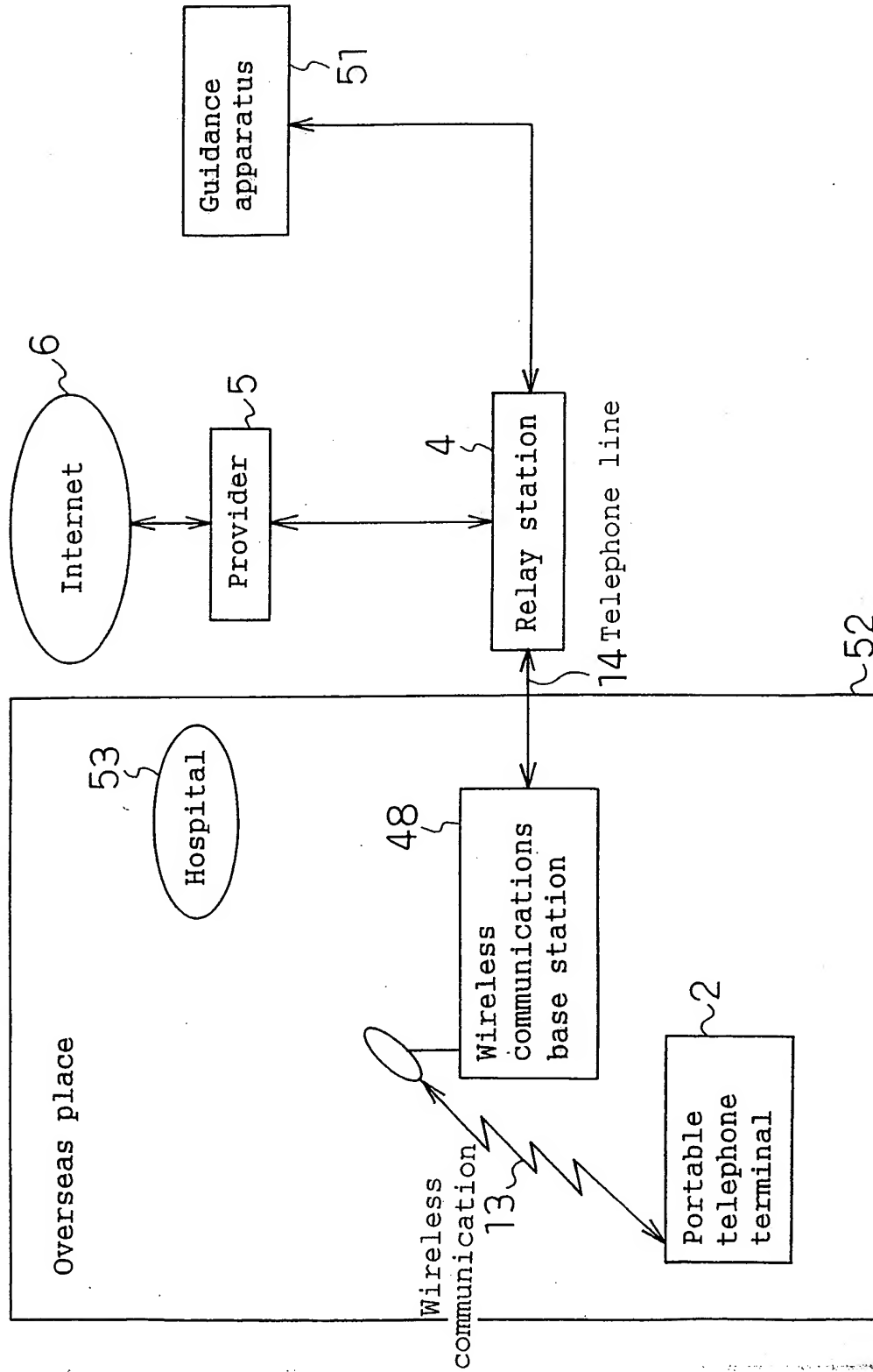


Fig. 24 (a)

Telephone number	Service
06-1234-1231*1	Information on the Umeda area in Osaka
06-1234-1231*2	Information on the Namba area in Osaka
06-1234-1231*3	Information on the Tennoji area in Osaka
06-1234-1231*3	Information on the Kyobashi area in Osaka
06-1234-1231*4	Information on the Osaka Bay area
:	:

Fig. 24 (b)

Telephone number	Service
06-1234-5671*1	Bargain sale information
06-1234-5671*2	Gourmet information
06-1234-5671*2	Sight-seeing information
06-1234-5671*3	Movies information
:	:

[Document Name] Abstract of Disclosure

[Abstract]

[Object]

Finding the URL of a Web page providing desired information is laborious and takes time. Further, when the URL of a Web page providing desired information is not known, the desired information cannot be obtained from the Internet Web pages via a portable telephone terminal.

[Solution]

The invention has: a portable telephone terminal 2 capable of being connected to the Internet 6; and a guidance apparatus 1 for distributing guidance information of an information providing site 3 to the portable telephone terminal 2. When the portable telephone terminal 2 makes a telephone call to a predetermined telephone number, the guidance apparatus 1 replies guidance information describing the address of the information providing site 3 to the portable telephone terminal 2 by e-mail. The replied e-mail is used by the portable telephone terminal 2 in order to access the information providing site 3.

[Selected drawing]

Figure 1